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METHOD OF ACTIVATING A NOVEL LIGAND REGULATORY PATHWAY

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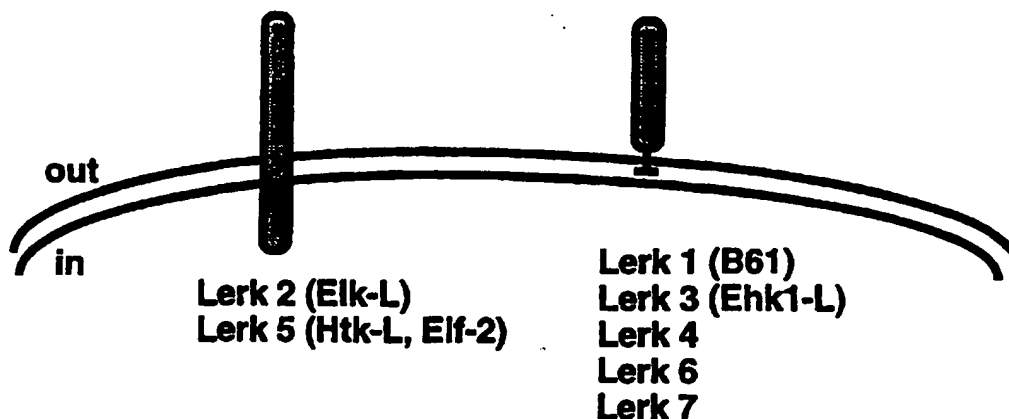


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(54) Title: METHOD OF ACTIVATING A NOVEL LIGAND REGULATORY PATHWAY

Ligands for EPH receptors are membrane anchored



(57) Abstract

A novel ligand regulatory pathway is disclosed and methods of activating the novel pathway in a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein. Methods are provided for identifying substances capable of activating the ligand regulatory pathway. Therapeutic methods for affecting neuronal development and regeneration and pharmaceutical compositions using the substances and Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins are also described.

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Title: Method of Activating a Novel Ligand Regulatory Pathway**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The invention relates to a novel ligand regulatory pathway, to methods for identifying substances capable of activating the novel pathway, methods for assaying for agonists or antagonists of the novel pathway, and to methods and pharmaceutical compositions for affecting neuronal development and regeneration.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Embryonic development of multicellular organisms is a highly ordered process that requires coordination of individual cells. Every cell must decipher the numerous signals it receives and then properly execute commands in order to achieve the correct position and differentiated state in the animal. The exquisite controls over cell growth, determination, migration and adhesion are mediated by molecules located on the plasma membrane surface.

A class of membrane associated molecules known to regulate cellular interactions are receptor tyrosine kinase proteins. The evolutionary conservation of genes encoding receptor tyrosine kinase proteins and their targets has emphasized the importance of these proteins in intracellular communication, and has also provided model systems for genetic analysis of tyrosine kinase signalling pathways.

A growing number of closely related transmembrane receptor tyrosine kinase proteins containing cell adhesion-like domains on their extracellular surface have been identified. Collectively, this group of proteins defines the *Eph* subfamily, which is made up of at least thirteen related but unique gene sequences in higher vertebrates (Hirai *et al.*, *Science* 238:1717-1720, 1987; Letwin *et al.*, *Oncogene* 3:621-627, 1988; Lindberg *et al.*, *Mol. Cell. Biol.* 10:6316-6324, 1990; Lhotak *et al.*, *Mol. Cell. Biol.* 11:2496-2502, 1991; Chan and Watt, *Oncogene* 6:1057-1061, 1991; Lai and Lemke, *Neuron* 6:691-704, 1991; Pasquale, *Cell Regulation* 2:523-534, 1991; Sajjadi *et al.*, *New Biologist* 3:769-778, 1991; Wicks *et al.*, *PNAS* 89:1611-1615, 1992; Gilardi-Hebenstreit *et al.*, *Oncogene* 7:2499-2506, 1992; Bohme *et al.*, *Oncogene* 8:2857-2862, 1993; Sajjadi and Pasquale, *Oncogene* 8:1801-1813, 1993). The presence of cell adhesion-like domains in this family of tyrosine kinases suggests that these proteins function in cell-cell interactions.

The other major families of proteins implicated in cell adhesion include the cadherins, selectins, integrins, and those of the immunoglobulin superfamily (reviewed by Hynes, R.O. and Landers, A.D., *Cell* 68, 303-322, 1992). The extracellular regions of cell adhesion molecules frequently contain peptide repeats, such as FN III motifs, epidermal growth factor (EGF) repeats, or Ig loops that may direct protein-protein interactions at the cell surface. A number of cell adhesion molecules in both vertebrates (Dodd, J. and Jessell, T.M., *Science*, 242, 692-699, 1988; Jessell, T.M., *Neuron*, 1, 3-13, 1988; Furley *et al.*, *Cell* 61, 157-170, 1990; Burns *et al.*, *Neuron*, 7, 209-220, 1991) and invertebrates (Bastiani *et al.*, *Cell* 48:745-755, 1987; Elkins *et al.*, *Cell* 60:565-575, 1990; Grenningloh *et al.*, *Cold Spring Harb.*

Symp. Quant. Biol. 55, 327-340, 1991; Nose *et al.*, *Cell* 70:553-567, 1992) have been implicated in axonal growth cone guidance and pathway/target recognition. Other aspects of neuronal morphogenesis involving cell-cell interactions may also require the activities of cell adhesion molecules (Edelman and Thiery, In *The Cell in Contact: Adhesions and Junctions as Morphogenetic Determinants*, Wiley, New York, 1985; Hatta *et al.*, *Dev. Biol.* 120:215-227, 1987; Takeichi, *Development* 102:639-655, 1988; Takeichi, *Annu. Rev. Biochem.* 59:237-252 1990; Takeichi, *Science* 251:1451-1455, 1991; Edelman, *Biochemistry* 27:3533-3543, 1988; Grumet, *Curr. Opin. Neurobiol.* 1:370-376, 1991; Hynes and Lander, *Cell* 68:303-322, 1992). For example, ectopic N-cadherin expression during gastrulation stage *Xenopus* embryos has been shown to interfere with segregation of the neural tube from the ectoderm (Detrick *et al.*, *Neuron* 4:493-506, 1990; Fujimori *et al.*, *Development* 110:97-104, 1990). Although many different types of cell adhesion molecules have been identified, little is known about how these adhesive interactions are regulated and how they function in cell signalling pathways during normal development.

A critical stage in the development of the nervous system is the projection of axons to their targets. Navigational decisions are made at the growth cones of the migrating axons. As axons grow their growth cones extend and retract filopodia and lamellipodia processes which are implicated in the navigational decisions and pathfinding abilities of migrating axons. Like peripheral nervous system axons, the growth cones of neurons associated with the central nervous system follow stereotyped pathways and apparently can selectively chose from a number of possible routes (reviewed by Goodman and Shatz, *Cell* 72:77-98, 1993). Early pathways in the vertebrate embryonic brain are thought to be arranged as a set of longitudinal tracts connected by commissures. However, the molecular mechanisms that underlay growth cone navigation axon pathfinding and commissure formation in development are poorly understood (Hynes, R.O. and Lander, A.D., 1992, *Cell* 68:303).

It is a fundamental principle of nervous system wiring that the projections of neurons from one region of the nervous system to another are organized topographically. During embryonic development a multitude of incoming axons must find and connect with a corresponding set of target cells to form a continuous topographic map. It has been suggested that formation and refinement of the topographic map of neurons may be directed in part by positional labels displayed on the surface of developing and migrating neurons. However, to date such positional labels have not been identified (Tessier-Lavigne, 1995, *Cell* 82:345-348). Recently, ligands for receptor tyrosine kinases of the Eph subfamily have been implicated as positional labels in the retinotectal system (Drescher *et al.*, 1995 *Cell* 82:359-370).

The developmental function of tyrosine kinases during axonogenesis has been studied in *Drosophila*. A function in axonal pathfinding is evident for the *Drosophila* *abl* tyrosine kinase when *abl* mutations are combined with mutations in other genes including the neural cell adhesion molecule, *fasciclin I* (*fas I*, Elkins *et al.*, *Cell* 60:565-575, 1990) or

disabled (*dab*, Gertler *et al.*, *Cell* 58:103-113, 1989). These studies have shown that the *abl* tyrosine kinase is specifically localized to the axonal compartment of the embryonic Central Nervous System (CNS) (Gertler *et al.*, *Cell* 58:103-113, 1989). Moreover, genetic analysis has indicated that subcellular localization to axons is essential for *abl* function during development (Henkemeyer *et al.*, *Cell* 63:949-960, 1990) and that mutations in second-site modifier genes including *fas* I and *dab* can reveal a role for *abl* in axonogenesis (Elkins *et al.*, *Cell* 60:565-575, 1990; Gertler *et al.*, *Cell* 58:103-113 1989). The requirement for tyrosine phosphorylation in axonal outgrowth and adhesion in *Drosophila* is strengthened by the identification in CNS axons of three transmembrane tyrosine phosphatases containing FN III motifs (Tian *et al.*, *Cell* 67:675-685, 1991; Yang *et al.*, *Cell* 67:661-673, 1991).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present inventors have identified and characterized a novel ligand regulatory pathway that plays a crucial role in cell-cell interactions and axonogenesis in the development and regeneration of the nervous system. The present inventors have determined that Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases activate a ligand regulatory pathway in cells expressing ligands for the Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases. Activation of the ligand regulatory pathway results in downstream activation of a series of regulatory pathways in the cells that control gene expression, cell division, cytoskeletal architecture, cell metabolism, cell migration and cell-cell interactions. The ligand regulatory pathway may be activated by an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase lacking in an active catalytic kinase domain.

In particular, the inventors have demonstrated that expression of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase is essential for formation of a commissure in the brain and that this essential function is independent of an intact catalytic kinase domain. The direct demonstration of a vital function in neuronal development for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase is unprecedented, as is the showing of a function for a receptor tyrosine kinase which is mediated by the extracellular domain, independently of the catalytic kinase domain of the receptor. The inventors have demonstrated for the first time that a protein having the extracellular, transmembrane and juxtamembrane domains of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase can provide a signal to a cell expressing a ligand for the receptor tyrosine kinases and thereby activate a ligand regulatory pathway in the cell expressing the ligand.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a method of activating a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell, comprising reacting an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein, with a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase on the surface of the cell thereby activating the ligand regulatory pathway in the cell. In an embodiment, the protein or part of the protein is lacking in catalytic kinase activity. In a

further embodiment, the part of the protein comprises an extracellular, transmembrane and juxtamembrane domain, or only an extracellular domain of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase, preferably Nuk.

5 The invention also provides a method for identifying a substance which is capable of binding to a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase and activating a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell, comprising reacting a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase on the surface of the cell, with at least one test substance, under conditions which permit the formation of substance-ligand complexes, and assaying for substance-ligand complexes, for free substance, for non-complexed ligands, or for activation of
10 the ligand.

Activation of the ligand may be assayed by measuring phosphorylation of the ligand, or binding of SH2 domains to the ligand, or by assaying for a biological affect on the cell, such as inhibition or stimulation of proliferation, differentiation or migration.

In an embodiment of the method, the substance is an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, which is not the native receptor tyrosine kinase protein for the
15 ligand, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein. In a further embodiment the part of the protein comprises an extracellular, transmembrane and juxtamembrane domain. In a still further embodiment the part of the protein comprises an extracellular domain.

20 Another aspect of the invention provides a method for assaying a medium for an agonist or antagonist of a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell which comprises providing a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase on the surface of the cell, reacting the cell with an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein, and a suspected
25 agonist or antagonist, under conditions which permit the formation of ligand-receptor tyrosine kinase protein complexes on the cell surface, and assaying for ligand-receptor tyrosine kinase protein complexes, for free receptor tyrosine kinase protein, for non-complexed proteins, for activation of the receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or for activation of the ligand.

30 In an embodiment, activation of the ligand is assayed by measuring phosphorylation of the ligand or binding of SH2 domains to the ligand or by assaying for a biological affect on the cell, such as inhibition or stimulation of proliferation, differentiation or migration.

The invention still further provides a method for affecting neuronal development
35 or regeneration in a mammal comprising administering to a mammal an effective amount of a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein. In an embodiment, the protein or part of the protein is lacking in a catalytic kinase domain. In another

embodiment, the part of the protein comprises an extracellular, juxtamembrane or transmembrane domain. In a further embodiment, the part of the protein comprises at least one of an extracellular, juxtamembrane and transmembrane domain, preferably an extracellular domain.

5 In yet another aspect, the invention provides a method for stimulating or inhibiting axonogenesis in a mammal comprising administering to a mammal an effective amount of a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein. In an embodiment, the part of the protein comprises an extracellular domain of an Eph subfamily
10 receptor tyrosine kinase. In a further embodiment, the protein or part of the protein is lacking in a catalytic kinase domain.

The invention also relates to a pharmaceutical composition which comprises a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein for affecting neuronal
15 development or regeneration and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent or excipient. The part of the protein may comprise an extracellular domain of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase, and the protein or part of the protein may be lacking in a catalytic kinase domain.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

20 The invention will be better understood with reference to the drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows the amino acid sequences of members of the Eph subfamily of receptor tyrosine kinases, dots indicate spaces introduced in order to optimize alignment, conserved cysteine residues are marked with asterisks and, arrows indicate the boundaries of the catalytic kinase domain;

25 Figure 2 shows the nucleotide sequence encoding the Nuk tyrosine kinase protein as shown in SEQ ID NO: 1;

Figure 3 shows the amino acid sequence of Nuk tyrosine kinase protein as shown in SEQ ID NO:2 and a schematic diagram of the regions of the Nuk receptor tyrosine kinase protein;

30 Figure 4 shows a recombinant DNA molecule having a *Nuk*¹ null mutation obtained by deletion of exon 2, corresponding to codons 29 to 50 as shown in SEQ ID NO: 1;

Figure 5 shows a recombinant DNA molecule encoding the *Nuk*² mutation in the ATP binding region of the kinase domain of Nuk protein, and a lac Z reporter gene;

35 Figure 6A is a photomicrograph showing a transverse section taken through the brain of heterozygous *Nuk*¹/+ mice across the anterior of the frontal lobes;

Figure 6B is a photomicrograph showing a transverse section taken through the brain of homozygous *Nuk*¹/*Nuk*¹ mice across the anterior of the frontal lobes;

Figure 6C is a photomicrograph showing a transverse section taken through the brain of homozygous *Nuk¹/Nuk¹* mice across the anterior of the frontal lobes;

Figure 6D is a photomicrograph showing a transverse section taken through the brain of homozygous *Nuk²/Nuk²* mice across the anterior of the frontal lobes (ac=anterior commissure, mt=medial tract);

Figure 7 A is a photomicrograph of a horizontal section taken through the brain of a *Nuk¹/+* mouse across the anterior of the frontal lobes, showing the medial tract of the anterior commissure;

Figure 7B is a photomicrograph of a horizontal section taken through the brain of a homozygous *Nuk¹/Nuk¹* mouse across the anterior of the frontal lobes, showing the absence of the medial tract of the anterior commissure;

Figure 8 shows horizontal sections taken through the brains of *Nuk¹/Nuk¹* (bottom) and *Nuk¹/+* (top) mice injected in one frontal lobe with a fluorescent dye, fast blue;

Figure 9 is a diagram illustrating the fast blue tracing of the temporal lobe;

Figure 10 is a diagram illustrating the axon pathways affected in *Nuk/Sek4* double homozygotes;

Figure 11 shows an alignment of the amino acid sequences of ligands of the Eph subfamily of receptor tyrosine kinase proteins, amino acids identical in at least five out of nine proteins are shown in inverse type, the cysteine residues common to all nine proteins are marked by asterisks;

Figure 12 is a diagram showing membrane anchored ligands for Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins; and

Figure 13 is a diagram showing a potential signalling role for Lerks.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

As hereinbefore mentioned, the present inventors have identified and characterized a novel ligand regulatory pathway that plays a crucial role in cell-cell interactions and axonogenesis in the development and regeneration of the nervous system. The present inventors have determined that Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases activate a ligand regulatory pathway in cells expressing ligands for the Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases.

Expression of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase, Nuk, was found to be essential for formation of at least one commissure in the brain, the medial tract of the anterior commissure. In null mice, lacking in Nuk expression the medial tract was found not to form. In *Nuk²/Nuk²* mice, expressing a fusion protein comprising the Nuk protein extracellular domain and β -galactosidase, the medial tract of the anterior commissure formed and was of a normal appearance. Therefore, the extracellular domain of Nuk protein is required for formation of the medial tract of the anterior commissure. Nuk protein did not appear to be expressed in the medial tract of the anterior commissure, but expression was

detected ventrally underlying the commissure. Ligands of Nuk protein are thought to be expressed in the medial tract of the commissure. Nuk protein also appears to play an important role in the formation of the habenular interpeduncle tract in the brain. Complete formation of the habenular interpeduncle tract was shown to require expression of at least two members of the Eph subfamily of receptor tyrosine kinase proteins and appeared to require expression of Nuk protein having a catalytic kinase domain. Both *Nuk¹/Nuk¹* and *Nuk²/Nuk²* homozygotes exhibit a mild phenotype in the habenular interpeduncle tract, however, this phenotype is more severe in either *Nuk¹/Nuk¹:Sek4/Sek4* and *Nuk²/Nuk²:Sek4/Sek4* double homozygotes.

The invention relates to a method of activating a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell, comprising reacting an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein with a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase on the surface of the cell thereby activating the ligand regulatory pathway in the cell.

The term "ligand regulatory pathway" used herein refers to the interactions of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein with a cell surface ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, to form a ligand receptor tyrosine kinase protein complex thereby activating a series of downstream regulatory pathways in the ligand expressing cell that affect the cell, for example by controlling gene expression, cell division, cytoskeletal architecture, cell metabolism, migration, cell-cell interactions and spatial positioning. Examples of such downstream regulatory pathways are the GAP/Ras pathway, the pathway that regulates the breakdown of the polyphosphoinositides through phospholipase C (PLC) and the Src/tyrosine kinase and Ras pathways.

"Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins" refers to proteins of the Eph subfamily which are characterised as encoding a structurally related cysteine rich extracellular domain containing a single immunoglobulin (Ig)-like loop near the N-terminus and two fibronectin III (FN III) repeats adjacent to the plasma membrane. The structure of the extracellular region is thought to determine ligand binding specificity. The intracellular regions contain the juxtamembrane and the catalytic kinase domain. Receptor mediated signal transduction is initiated in the receptor expressing cell by ligand binding to the extracellular domain, which facilitates dimerization of the receptor and autophosphorylation.

Over a dozen members of the Eph subfamily have been identified (van der Geer et al., 1994, *Annu. Rev. Cell. Biol.* 10:251-237). Examples of Eph family members include mouse Nuk and its homologs Hek5, Cek5 in chickens (Pasquale, *Cell Regulation* 2:523-534, 1991), Sek3 in mice, and Erk in humans; Eek (Chan and Watt, *Oncogene* 6:1057-1061 1991); rat Elk and its homologs including Cek6a in chickens and xEK (Lhotak et al., 1991, *Mol. Cell. Biol.* 11:2496-2502); human Hek2 and its homologs including Sek4 in mice and Cek10 in chickens;

and human Htk and its homologs including Myk1 in mice. The Eph family member, *Sek* has been shown to be segmentally expressed in specific rhombomeres of the mouse hindbrain (Nieto *et al.*, *Development* 116:1137-1150, 1992). Other members of the family include Eck (Lindberg and Hunter, 1990, *Mol. Cell Biol.* 10:6316-6324); Ceks 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 (Pasquale, 1991, *Cell Regulation*, 2:523-534) and Saajadi and Pasquale, 1993, *Oncogene*, 8, 1807-1813); Ehk 1 and 2 (Maisonpierre *et al.*, 1993, *Oncogene*, 8:3277-3288); Myk 1 and 2 (Andres *et al.*, 1994); and Heks 4, 5, 7 (GenBank Accession No. L36644), 8 (GenBank Accession No. L36645) and 11 (GenBank Accession No. L36642) (Fox, *et al.*, 1995, *Oncogene*, 10, 897-905). The amino acid sequences of some known members of the Eph subfamily of receptor tyrosine kinases are described in Fox *et al.*, 1995 (*Oncogene* 10, 897-905) and shown in Figure 1, which is excerpted from Fox *et al.*, 1995, *supra*. Amino acid sequences for other Eph subfamily receptors can be found in GenBank (e.g. Accession Nos. L25890 (Nuk), X13411 (rat Elk), U07695 (human Htk) and the publications referred to therein).

Preferably, Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases, or parts thereof, which bind to transmembrane ligands are used in the present invention. For example, preferred Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases, or parts thereof, used in the present invention include mouse Nuk and its homologs Hek5, Cek5 in chickens, and Erk; rat Elk and its homologs including Cek6a in chickens and xEK; human Hek2 and its homologs including Sek4 in mice and Cek10 in chickens; and human Htk and its homologs including Myk1 in mice.

All the hallmarks of a receptor tyrosine kinase of the Eph subfamily family are exemplified in Nuk protein, including 20 cysteine residues whose position is conserved in the extracellular domain of Eph family members (bold type, Figure 3), an immunoglobulin-like domain near the amino terminus (Ig-like), and two fibronectin type III repeats (FN III; between Nuk amino acids residues 330-420 and 444-534). The Ig-like domain of Nuk contains specific residues (Cys⁷⁰, Trp⁸⁰, Cys¹¹⁵) known to be conserved in the Ig superfamily (Williams and Barclay, *Ann. Rev. Immunol.* 6:381-405, 1988).

The cartoon in Figure 3 shows the location of the various domains of Nuk protein. Following a 26 amino acid hydrophobic signal peptide, the Nuk protein extracellular domain is composed of an Ig-like domain and two FN III repeats. The Nuk protein extracellular domain also contains 20 cysteines whose position is conserved in the Eph family (Lhotak *et al.*, *Mol. Cell. Biol.* 11:2496-2502, 1991). A hydrophobic transmembrane domain divides the Nuk protein into approximately two halves, a 548 amino acid extracellular region and a 419 amino acid cytoplasmic region which contains a tyrosine kinase catalytic domain.

Nuk is most highly related to the full length amino acid sequence of human Hek5 and also to chicken Cek5 (96% identity; Pasquale, *Cell Regulation* 2:523-534, 1991) and to short PCR products of mRNA from rats (*Tyro 5*; Lai and Lemke, *Neuron* 6:691-704, 1991) and humans (*Erk*; Chan and Watt, *Oncogene* 6:1057-1061 1991). The close identity between *Nuk* and *Cek5* suggest they represent the mammalian and avian orthologs of the same progenitor

gene. The absence of full length cDNAs for *Tyro 5* and *Erk* precludes the determination of whether these sequences correspond to the same or a closely related but different gene.

It will be appreciated that the Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein for use in activating a ligand regulatory pathway, as described herein, may be an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein. An isoform contains the same number and kinds of amino acids as the protein, but the isoform has a different molecular structure. The isoforms contemplated for use in the methods of the invention are isoforms having the same functional properties as the Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins.

In a preferred embodiment, the part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids comprises an Eph subfamily tyrosine kinase protein, preferably Nuk, lacking a catalytic kinase domain. For example, the part of the protein containing at least one of the extracellular domain, the transmembrane domain and the juxtamembrane domain or parts thereof, preferably, the extracellular domain is used in the methods herein.

The extracellular domain is characterised by a cysteine rich region, whose position is conserved in the extracellular domain of Eph family members an immunoglobulin-like domain near the amino terminus (Ig-like), and two fibronectin type III repeats (FN III). Extracellular domains of Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins may be identified based on the above-noted features and based on a comparison of the amino acid sequences of the extracellular domains of known Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins. The extracellular domain may be generally defined as the region extracellular to the transmembrane domain, which is indicated in bold underline in Figure 1.

The protein may also be a protein having substantial sequence identity with the sequence of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein. The term "sequence having substantial identity" means those amino acid sequences having slight or inconsequential sequence variations from the sequence of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein. The variations may be attributable to local mutations or structural modifications. Suitable proteins may have over 95%, preferably over 97%, most preferably over 99% identity with an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein.

An Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase or part thereof, may be selected for use in the present invention based on the nature of the ligand which is targeted or selected. The selection of a particular ligand and complementary Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase in the method of the invention will allow for the identification of specific substances that affect a ligand regulatory pathway.

An Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase or part thereof may be prepared from Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins isolated from cells which are known to express the proteins. Alternatively the protein or part of the protein may be prepared using recombinant DNA methods known in the art. By way of example, nucleic acid molecules

having a sequence which codes for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or a part of the protein may be prepared and incorporated in a known manner into an appropriate expression vector which ensures good expression of the protein or part thereof. Possible expression vectors include but are not limited to cosmids, plasmids, or modified viruses, so long as the vector is compatible with the host cell used.

Suitable transcription and translation elements may be derived from a variety of sources, including bacterial, fungal, viral, mammalian, or insect genes. Selection of appropriate transcription and translation elements is dependent on the host cell chosen, and may be readily accomplished by one of ordinary skill in the art. Examples of such elements include: a transcriptional promoter and enhancer or RNA polymerase binding sequence, a ribosomal binding sequence, including a translation initiation signal. Additionally, depending on the host cell chosen and the vector employed, other genetic elements, such as an origin of replication, additional DNA restriction sites, enhancers, and sequences conferring inducibility of transcription may be incorporated into the expression vector. It will also be appreciated that the necessary transcriptional and translation elements may be supplied by the native receptor tyrosine kinase protein and/or its flanking regions.

The recombinant molecules may also contain a reporter gene which facilitates the selection of host cells transformed or transfected with a recombinant molecule. Examples of reporter genes are genes encoding a protein such as β -galactosidase, chloramphenicol acetyltransferase, firefly luciferase, or an immunoglobulin or portion thereof such as the Fc portion of an immunoglobulin preferably IgG. In a preferred embodiment, the reporter gene is *lac Z*. Transcription of the reporter gene is monitored by changes in the concentration of the reporter protein such as β -galactosidase, chloramphenicol acetyltransferase, or firefly luciferase.

Recombinant molecules can be introduced into host cells via transformation, transfection, infection, electroporation etc. Methods for transforming transfecting, etc. host cells to express foreign DNA are well known in the art (see, e.g., Itakura et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,704,362; Hinnen et al., PNAS USA 75:1929-1933, 1978; Murray et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,801,542; Upshall et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,935,349; Hagen et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,784,950; Axel et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,399,216; Goeddel et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,766,075; and Sambrook et al. Molecular Cloning A Laboratory Manual, 2nd edition, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 1989, all of which are incorporated herein by reference and see the detailed discussion below).

Suitable host cells include a wide variety of prokaryotic and eukaryotic host cells, including bacterial, mammalian, yeast or other fungi, viral, plant, or insect cells.

The Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein or parts thereof may also be prepared by chemical synthesis using techniques well known in the chemistry of proteins such as solid phase synthesis (Merrifield, 1964, J. Am. Chem. Assoc. 85:2149-2154) or synthesis in

homogenous solution (Houbenweyl, 1987, Methods of Organic Chemistry, ed. E. Wansch, Vol. 15 I and II, Thieme, Stuttgart).

Conjugates of the protein, or parts thereof, with other molecules, such as proteins or polypeptides, may be prepared and used in the methods described herein. This may be accomplished, for example, by the synthesis of N-terminal or C-terminal fusion proteins. Thus, fusion proteins may be prepared by fusing, through recombinant techniques, the N-terminal or C-terminal of an *Eph* subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein or parts thereof, and the sequence of a selected protein or marker protein with a desired biological function. The resultant fusion proteins contain *Eph* subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein or a part thereof fused to the selected protein or marker protein as described herein. Examples of proteins which may be used to prepare fusion proteins include immunoglobulins and parts thereof such as the constant region of immunoglobulin γ 1, and lymphokines such as gamma interferon, tumor necrosis factor, IL-1, IL-2, IL-3, IL-4, IL-5, IL-6, IL-7, IL-8, IL-9, IL-10, IL-11, GM-CSF, CSF-1 and G-CSF.

Sequences which encode the above-described proteins may generally be obtained from a variety of sources, including for example, depositories which contain plasmids encoding sequences including the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC, Rockville Maryland), and the British Biotechnology Limited (Cowley, Oxford England). Examples of such plasmids include BBG 12 (containing the GM-CSF gene coding for the mature protein of 127 amino acids), BBG 6 (which contains sequences encoding gamma interferon), ATCC No. 39656 (which contains sequences encoding TNF), ATCC No. 20663 (which contains sequences encoding alpha interferon), ATCC Nos. 31902 and 39517 (which contains sequences encoding beta interferon), ATCC No. 67024 (which contains a sequence which encodes Interleukin-18), ATCC Nos. 39405, 39452, 39516, 39626 and 39673 (which contains sequences encoding Interleukin-2), ATCC Nos. 59399, 59398, and 67326 (which contain sequences encoding Interleukin-3), ATCC Nos. 57592 (which contains sequences encoding Interleukin-4), ATCC Nos. 59394 and 59395 (which contain sequences encoding Interleukin-5), and ATCC No. 67153 (which contains sequences encoding Interleukin-6).

The *Eph* subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, isoforms or parts thereof, used in the method of the invention may be insolubilized. For example, the receptor protein or part thereof, preferably the extracellular domain, may be bound to a suitable carrier. Examples of suitable carriers are agarose, cellulose, dextran, Sephadex, Sepharose, liposomes, carboxymethyl cellulose polystyrene, filter paper, ion-exchange resin, plastic film, plastic tube, glass beads, polyamine-methyl vinyl-ether-maleic acid copolymer, amino acid copolymer, ethylene-maleic acid copolymer, nylon, silk, etc. The carrier may be in the shape of, for example, a tube, test plate, beads, disc, sphere etc. The insolubilized receptor tyrosine kinase protein may be prepared by reacting the material with a suitable insoluble carrier using known chemical or physical methods, for example, cyanogen bromide coupling.

The receptor tyrosine kinase protein or parts thereof may also be expressed on the surface of a cell using the methods described herein.

Ligands for Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases may be identified based on homology with known ligands and based on their interaction with the extracellular domain of Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases. At least seven ligands for Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases have been identified, all of which are membrane anchored via either a GPI linkage or transmembrane domain (see Figure 12), including B61 (Holzmann et al., 1990, *Mol. Cell Biol.* 10: 5830-5838 and Bartley et al., 1994 *Nature* 368:558-560), also known as LERK-1 (Beckmann et al., 1994, *EMBO J.* 13:3757-3762 and Davis et al., 1994 *Science* 266, 816-819), LERK-2 (Beckmann et al., 1994, *supra*, and Davis et al., 1994 *supra*, also known as Eplg-2 (Fletcher et al, 1994, *Oncogene* 9:3241-3247), Cek5 ligand, the chicken homolog of Lerk-2 and Elk-L, (Shao et al., 1994, *J. Biol. Chem.* 269:26606-26609), ELF-1 (Cheng and Flanagan, 1994, *Cell*, 79:157-168), EHK1-L (Davis et al., 1994, *supra*), also known as LERK-3 (Kozlosky et al., 1995 *Oncogene* 10:299-306) and LERK-4 (Kozlosky et al., 1994, *supra*) ELF-1, AL-1/RAGS (GPI-anchored, Drescher, et al., 1995, *Cell*, 82:359-370), LERK-4, HTKL/ELF-2/Lerk5, LERK-2/CEK5-L/ELK-L (Tessier-Lavigne, M., 1995, *supra*). Ligands of Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases show significant homology with each other. An alignment of the amino acid sequences of ligands of Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases are shown in Figure 11 (excerpted from Drescher, et al., 1995, *supra*. Ligands for the Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinases are known to show promiscuous interactions with different Eph subfamily receptors (Brambilla et al., 1995, *EMBO J.* 14:3116-3126).

In an embodiment of the invention, the ligands are ligands which are membrane anchored via a transmembrane domain. Preferably, the selected ligands are Elk-L/LERK2/Efl-3/Cek5-L; hHtk-L/ELF-2/LERK5 (Tessier-Lavigne, M., 1995, *Cell* 82:345-348), and hElk-L3/Elf-6. These ligands have highly conserved cytoplasmic reions with multiple potential sites for phosphorylation. The amino acid sequences for hElk-L3, hHtk-L and hElk-L, and the extracellular domains of the ligands can be found in GenBank (e.g. Accession Nos. L38734 (Htk) and L37361 (Efl-3)).

In the methods of the invention to activate a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell, the ligand should be expressed on the surface of the cell. Preferably, the cell is one which expresses native ligand. However, it will be appreciated that the invention also contemplates chimeric cells expressing a recombinant ligand.

The invention also provides a method for identifying a substance which is capable of binding to a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase and activating a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell, comprising reacting a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase with at least one substance which potentially can bind with the ligand, under conditions which permit the formation of substance-ligand complexes,

and assaying for substance-ligand complexes, for free substance, for non-complexed ligands, or for activation of the ligand.

Activation of the ligand may be assayed by measuring phosphorylation of the ligand, binding of SH2 domains to the ligand, and where the ligand is expressed on a cell surface, by assaying for a biological affect on the cell, such as inhibition or stimulation of proliferation, differentiation or migration. SH2-domains of cytoplasmic signalling proteins are known to bind to phosphorylated receptor tyrosine kinase proteins. In particular, the SH2 domains of p21^{ras} GTPase-activating protein (GAP), Src, and phosphoinositide-specific phospholipase C (PLC γ) may bind an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein. SH2 domains of cytoplasmic signalling proteins may bind to phosphorylated ligands to mediate the interactions of the phosphorylated ligand with signalling proteins of the downstream regulatory pathways in the cell.

Upon binding of a ligand having an intracellular domain (e.g. Lerks such as Lerk2 and Lerk5) to an Eph subfamily receptor, a signal transduction event in the ligand expressing cell may be initiated. This could occur by activation of one or more cytoplasmic tyrosine kinases which would phosphorylate the intracellular domain of the ligand, which would then lead to the binding of SH2 domain-containing proteins to the phosphorylated activated ligand. A diagram of a potential signalling role for Lerks is shown in Figure 13.

In an embodiment, of the method, the substance is an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein. In a further embodiment the part of the protein comprises an extracellular domain. In a preferred embodiment, the substances is an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase which is not the native receptor tyrosine kinase for the ligand.

Conditions which permit the formation of substance-ligand complexes may be selected having regard to factors such as the nature and amounts of the substance and the ligand.

The substance-ligand complex, free substance or non-complexed ligand may be isolated by conventional isolation techniques, for example, salting out, chromatography, electrophoresis, gel filtration, fractionation, absorption, polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis, agglutination, or combinations thereof. To facilitate the assay of the components, antibody against the ligand or the substance, or a labelled ligand, or a labelled substance may be utilized. Antibodies, receptor protein or substance may be labelled with a detectable substance as described above.

The substance used in the method of the invention may be insolubilized. For example, the receptor protein or substance may be bound to a suitable carrier. Examples of suitable carriers are agarose, cellulose, dextran, Sephadex, Sepharose, carboxymethyl cellulose polystyrene, filter paper, ion-exchange resin, plastic film, plastic tube, glass beads, polyamine-methyl vinyl-ether-maleic acid copolymer, amino acid copolymer,

ethylene-maleic acid copolymer, nylon, silk, etc. The carrier may be in the shape of, for example, a tube, test plate, beads, disc, sphere etc. The insolubilized substance may be prepared by reacting the material with a suitable insoluble carrier using known chemical or physical methods, for example, cyanogen bromide coupling.

5 The substance may also be expressed on the surface of a cell using the methods described herein. Where the substance is expressed on the surface of a cell the presence of a substance which can bind to and be activated by the receptor tyrosine kinase protein may be identified by assaying for activation of the substance or by assaying for a biological affect on the cell.

10 The above mentioned methods of the invention may be used to identify substances which bind with ligands of the Eph subfamily of receptor tyrosine kinase proteins, thereby activating a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell, particularly those involved in neuronal development, axonal migration, pathfinding and regeneration. Identification and isolation of such substances will permit studies of the role of the substance in the developmental
15 regulation of axonogenesis and neural regeneration, and permit the development of substances which affect these roles, such as functional or non-functional analogues of the extracellular domain of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase. It will be appreciated that such substances will be useful as pharmaceuticals to modulate axonogenesis, nerve cell interactions and regeneration to treat conditions such as neurodegenerative diseases and cases of nerve
20 injury.

 Substances which bind to and activate the ligand may be identified by assaying for protein tyrosine kinase activity i.e. by assaying for phosphorylation of the tyrosine residues of the ligand, using known techniques such as those using anti-phosphotyrosine antibodies and labelled phosphorous. For example, immunoblots of the complexes may be
25 analyzed by autoradiography (³²P-labelled samples) or may be blocked and probed with antiphosphotyrosine antibodies as described in Koch, C.A. et al., 1989 (Mol. Cell. Biol. 9, 4131-4140).

 Substances which bind to and activate the ligand may also be assayed by assaying for a biological affect on the cell, for example inhibition or stimulation of cell proliferation,
30 differentiation and migration. Substances which bind to and activate the ligand will include Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins and portions of the proteins. The method will permit identification of the minimum amino acid sequence of the protein which is required for ligand binding and activation.

 The invention further relates to a method for assaying a medium for an agonist or
35 antagonist of a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell which comprises providing a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase on the cell surface, reacting the cell with an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein or part of a protein and a suspected agonist or antagonist under conditions which permit the formation of ligand-

receptor tyrosine kinase protein complexes on the cell surface, and assaying for ligand-receptor tyrosine kinase protein complexes, for free receptor tyrosine kinase protein, for non-complexed proteins, for activation of the receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or for activation of the ligand.

5 Substances which activate the ligand regulatory pathway, such as Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase proteins or parts thereof, and agonists or antagonists of the ligand regulatory pathway may be used for affecting neuronal development or regeneration in a mammal. The substances, agonists and antagonists may be used to stimulate or inhibit neuronal development, regeneration and axonal migration associated with neurodegenerative
10 conditions and conditions involving trauma and injury to the nervous system, for example Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, demyelinating diseases, such as multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, bacterial and viral infections of the nervous system, deficiency diseases, such as Wernicke's disease and nutritional polyneuropathy, progressive supranuclear palsy, Shy Drager's syndrome, multistem
15 degeneration and olivo ponto cerebellar atrophy, peripheral nerve damage, trauma and ischemia resulting from stroke.

 The ability of substances, agonists, and antagonists identified using the methods of the invention to affect neuronal development or regeneration and to stimulate nerve regeneration, may be confirmed in an animal model having an injured peripheral nervous
20 system. Examples of mammals having an injured peripheral nervous system include animals having damaged axons, such as axotomized facial neurons (Sendtner et al. Nature, 345, 440-441, 1990), neurodegenerative conditions (for example, the MPTP model as described in Langston J.W. et al., Symposium of Current Concepts and Controversies in Parkinson's
25 Disease, Montebello, Quebec, Canada, 1983 and Tatton W.G. et al., Can. J. Neurol. Sci. 1992, 19), and traumatic and non-traumatic peripheral nerve damage (for example, animal stroke models such as the one described in MacMillan et al. Brain Research 151:353-368 (1978)).

 The present invention thus provides a method for affecting neuronal development or regeneration in a mammal comprising administering to a mammal an effective amount of a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part
30 of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein, or a substance identified using the methods of the invention. The invention also contemplates a method for stimulating or inhibiting axonogenesis in a mammal comprising administering to a mammal an effective amount of a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the
35 protein, or a substance identified using the methods of the invention.

 The invention still further relates to a pharmaceutical composition which comprises a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein, or a

substance identified using the methods of the invention, for affecting neuronal development or regeneration and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent or excipient. The pharmaceutical compositions may be used to stimulate or inhibit neuronal development, regeneration and axonal migration associated with neurodegenerative conditions and
5 conditions involving trauma and injury to the nervous system as described above.

The compositions of the invention are administered to subjects in a biologically compatible form suitable for pharmaceutical administration *in vivo*. By "biologically compatible form suitable for administration *in vivo*" is meant a form of the protein to be administered in which any toxic effects are outweighed by the therapeutic effects of the
10 protein. The term subject is intended to include mammals. Examples of subjects include humans, dogs, cats, mice, rats, and transgenic species thereof. Administration of a therapeutically active amount of the pharmaceutical compositions of the present invention is defined as an amount effective, at dosages and for periods of time necessary to achieve the desired result. For example, a therapeutically active amount of an Eph subfamily receptor
15 tyrosine kinase protein may vary according to factors such as the condition, age, sex, and weight of the individual. Dosage regimes may be adjusted to provide the optimum therapeutic response. For example, several divided doses may be administered daily or the dose may be proportionally reduced as indicated by the exigencies of the therapeutic situation.

The active compound (e.g., protein) may be administered in a convenient manner such as by injection (subcutaneous, intravenous, etc.), oral administration inhalation, transdermal application or rectal administration. Depending on the route of administration, the active compound may be coated in a material to protect the compound from the action of
20 enzymes, acids and other natural conditions which may inactivate the compound. The pharmaceutical compositions of the invention can be for oral, local, inhalant or intracerebral administration. Preferably, the pharmaceutical compositions of the invention are administered directly to the peripheral or central nervous system, for example by administration intracerebrally.

The pharmaceutical composition of the invention can be administered to a subject
30 in an appropriate carrier or diluent, co-administered with enzyme inhibitors or in an appropriate carrier such as microporous or solid beads or liposomes. The term "pharmaceutically acceptable carrier" as used herein is intended to include diluents such as saline and aqueous buffer solutions. Liposomes include water-in-oil-in-water emulsions as well as conventional liposomes (Strejan et al., (1984) J. Neuroimmunol 7:27). The active
35 compound may also be administered parenterally or intraperitoneally. Dispersions can also be prepared in glycerol, liquid polyethylene glycols, and mixtures thereof and in oils. Under ordinary conditions of storage and use, these preparations may contain a preservative to prevent the growth of microorganisms.

Pharmaceutical compositions suitable for injectable use include sterile aqueous solutions (where water soluble) or dispersions and sterile powders for the extemporaneous preparation of sterile injectable solutions or dispersions. In all cases, the composition must be sterile and must be fluid to the extent that easy syringability exists. It must be stable under the conditions of manufacture and storage and must be preserved against the contaminating action of microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi. The pharmaceutically acceptable carrier can be a solvent or dispersion medium containing, for example, water, ethanol, polyol (for example, glycerol, propylene glycol, and liquid polyethylene glycol, and the like), and suitable mixtures thereof. The proper fluidity can be maintained, for example, by the use of a coating such as lecithin, by the maintenance of the required particle size in the case of dispersion and by the use of surfactants. Prevention of the action of microorganisms can be achieved by various antibacterial and antifungal agents, for example, parabens, chlorobutanol, phenol, asorbic acid, thimerosal, and the like. In many cases, it will be preferable to include isotonic agents, for example, sugars, polyalcohols such as manitol, sorbitol, sodium chloride in the composition. Prolonged absorption of the injectable compositions can be brought about by including in the composition an agent which delays absorption, for example, aluminum monostearate and gelatin.

Sterile injectable solutions can be prepared by incorporating active compound in the required amount in an appropriate solvent with one or a combination of ingredients enumerated above, as required, followed by filtered sterilization. Generally, dispersions are prepared by incorporating the active compound into a sterile vehicle which contains a basic dispersion medium and the required other ingredients from those enumerated above. In the case of sterile powders for the preparation of sterile injectable solutions, the preferred methods of preparation are vacuum drying and freeze-drying which yields a powder of the active ingredient (e.g., antibody) plus any additional desired ingredient from a previously sterile-filtered solution thereof.

When the active compound is suitably protected, as described above, the composition may be orally administered, for example, with an inert diluent or an assimilable edible carrier. As used herein "pharmaceutically acceptable carrier" includes any and all solvents, dispersion media, coatings, antibacterial and antifungal agents, isotonic and absorption delaying agents, and the like. The use of such media and agents for pharmaceutically active substances is well known in the art. Except insofar as any conventional media or agent is incompatible with the active compound, use thereof in the therapeutic compositions is contemplated. Supplementary active compounds can also be incorporated into the compositions.

It is contemplated that the pharmaceutical compositions may be administered locally to stimulate axonogenesis and pathfinding in areas of the body in need thereof, for example in areas of local nerve injury or in areas where normal nerve pathway development

has not occurred. It is also contemplated that the pharmaceutical compositions may be placed in a specific orientation or alignment along a presumptive pathway to stimulate axon pathfinding along that line, for example the pharmaceutical compositions may be present on microcarriers laid down along the pathway. In an embodiment, the pharmaceutical compositions may be used to stimulate formation of connections between areas of the brain, such as the area between the two hemispheres or between the thalamus and ventral midbrain. In an embodiment, the compositions may be used to stimulate formation of the medial tract of the anterior commissure or the habenular interpeduncle.

It is also contemplated that the pharmaceutical compositions of the invention may comprise cells or viruses, preferably retroviral vectors, transformed with nucleic acid molecules encoding a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein, or a substance identified using the methods of the invention, such that they express the protein, isoform, or a part of the protein, preferably the extracellular domain, or substance *in vivo*. Viral vectors suitable for use in the present invention are well known in the art including recombinant vaccinia viral vectors (U.S. Patent Nos. 4,603,112 and 4,769,330), recombinant pox virus vectors (PCT Publication No. WO 89/01973), and preferably, retroviral vectors ("Recombinant Retroviruses with Amphotropic and Ecotropic Host Ranges," PCT Publication No. WO 90/02806; "Retroviral Packaging Cell Lines and Processes of Using Same," PCT Publication No. WO 89/07150; and "Antisense RNA for Treatment of Retroviral Disease States," PCT Publication No. WO 87/03451). The compositions containing cells or viruses may be directly introduced into a subject as described herein. Nucleic acid molecules encoding a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein, or a substance identified using the methods of the invention, may also be introduced into a subject using physical techniques such as microinjection and electroporation or chemical methods such as coprecipitation and incorporation of nucleic acids into liposomes. They may also be delivered in the form of an aerosol or by lavage.

The following non-limiting examples are illustrative of the present invention:

EXAMPLES

The following materials and methods were utilized in the investigations outlined in the examples:

Cloning of *Nuk* The coding region of *Nuk* was cloned using the partial λ Q1, *Nuk* cDNA insert to probe a λ gt10 expression library constructed from a mouse erythroleukemia cell line by screening with anti-phosphotyrosine antibodies (Ben-David et al., EMBO 10:317-325, 1991). Cloning of *Nuk* was carried out as described in Henkemeyer et al., 1994 (*Oncogene* 9:1001-1014) and in co-pending International Application PCT CA95/00254 and co-pending application serial No. 08/235,407, which are incorporated herein by reference. The

nucleotide sequence encoding Nuk is shown in Figure 2 (SEQ. ID. NO: 1) and the amino acid sequence of Nuk protein is shown in Figure 3 (SEQ. ID. NO: 2).

Generation of Loss of Function *Nuk* mutant

5 A loss of function mutation in *Nuk*, designated *Nuk*¹ was generated in embryonic stem cells, and germline transmission of the null allele was obtained as described in co-pending International Application PCT CA95/00254 and co-pending application serial No. 08/235,407.

10 Briefly, the null mutation was obtained by deletion of exon 2, corresponding to codons 29 to 50, as shown in Figure 4. To obtain germ line transmission of the mutation *Nuk*¹ embryonic stem cell lines (ES) were aggregated with 8 cell embryos *in vitro* and the resulting blastocysts were transferred into recipient females. Upon birth, animals chimeric for ES and embryonic stem cells were recovered by scoring for eye pigment and coat colour. Breeding of these "aggregation chimeras" confirmed that the germ line of at least one founder mouse is derived completely from the ES cells. Adult mice homozygous for the mutation did not
15 express Nuk protein.

Generation of a *Nuk-lac Z* fusion chimeric receptor mutant

A targeted mutation, designated *Nuk*² was generated in the *Nuk* gene as described in co-pending International Application PCT CA95/00254 and co-pending application serial No. 08/235,407 and shown in Figure 5. A *pPNT-LOX-Nuk*² gene trap vector was used to delete
20 the GXGXXG ATP binding region of the kinase domain (amino acids 623-707,) to create a *Nuk-lac Z* fusion receptor in ES cells. Chimeric animals were prepared as described above, by aggregating the ES cells with 8 cell CD1 embryos.

Animals generated with the *Nuk*² mutation provided *Nuk* expressing cells staining for β -galactosidase activity, providing a convenient marker for *Nuk*-positive cells
25 in both heterozygous and homozygous backgrounds. The *Nuk*² mutation led to the expression of a *Nuk*-beta galactosidase fusion protein in mouse heterozygous embryos, detected by a blue/green colour.

EXAMPLE 1

The role of Nuk protein, the extracellular domain of Nuk protein and the
30 catalytic kinase domain of Nuk protein were investigated as follows. Loss of function *Nuk* mutant mice, designated *Nuk*¹ were prepared as described herein. These mice may also be referred to as null mice as they do not express Nuk protein. *Nuk-lac Z* fusion chimeric receptor mutant mice, designated *Nuk*² were prepared as described above. These mice express a fusion protein having the entire extracellular domain of Nuk, but lacking in the Nuk
35 catalytic kinase domain, which is replaced by β -galactosidase. All mice, exhibited apparently normal appearance and behaviour.

To analyze the brains of *Nuk* mutant mice, specimens were dissected and fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde in PBS. The fixed specimens were either embedded in paraffin and

sectioned on a microtome or cryoprotected in 30% sucrose and sectioned using a cryostat to obtain serial sections.

Serial sections were taken of a number of brains of heterozygous control and both *Nuk*¹ and *Nuk*² homozygous embryos at E14.5 to E18.5 days of embryonic development and of newborn and adult mice at 1 to 1.5 years of age. 6 to 30 µm thick coronal or horizontal sections were prepared and viewed on a compound microscope under bright field or polarized light. Figures 6A, 6B, 6C and 6D show photomicrographs of horizontal sections taken across the anterior of the temporal lobes at the level of the anterior commissure and pars posterior medial tract, which connects the frontal lobes. In heterozygous *Nuk*^{1/+} mice the pars posterior medial tract, and the pars anterior tract of the anterior commissure are clearly visible (Figure 6A) and appear the same as in wild type mice. Serial sections show that the pars posterior medial tract forms a continuous tract between the two frontal lobes. The entire medial tract is not visible in Figure 6A due to the plane of the section.

The presence of a continuous pars posterior medial tract communicating between the frontal lobes, was confirmed by dye injection experiments, which are illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 9. Briefly, a fluorescent dye (fast blue) was injected into one temporal lobe of anaesthetized adult mice, either heterozygous or homozygous for the *Nuk*¹ mutation, approximately one year old, through standard surgical techniques. Mice were revived and the fast blue was allowed to travel through the axons of the temporal neurons that received dye for 2 days, after which the mice were sacrificed, perfused with fixative, and the brains were collected and post-fixed. After cryoprotection in 30% sucrose, serial sections were prepared and the brain sections were viewed by fluorescence microscopy. Where the dye was found to have been transported across to the opposite frontal lobe, the presence of an intact medial tract was confirmed.

In homozygous *Nuk*¹/*Nuk*¹ null mice the pars posterior medial tract was found to be absent as shown in Figures 6B, 6C and 7B. Absence of the medial tract was confirmed by the inability of dye injected into one frontal lobe to cross to the opposite frontal lobe as shown in Figure 8 (bottom). Absolutely no label was detected in the opposite frontal lobe, even when large amounts of dye were injected to maximize labelling. In *Nuk*^{1/+} mice, however, small amounts of dye were sufficient to produce visible labelling in the opposite frontal lobe, as shown in Figure 8 (top). Labeling was detected in the medial tract of *Nuk*^{1/+} mice but not in *Nuk*¹/*Nuk*¹ mice. This directly shows that expression of Nuk protein is required for the formation of the medial tract.

In homozygous *Nuk*²/*Nuk*² mice the medial tract was found to be present, as shown in Figure 6D and was shown by dye injection to form a continuous connection between the frontal lobes, as in the wild type and *Nuk*^{1/+} heterozygotes. This surprisingly indicates that the extracellular domain of Nuk, in the absence of the catalytic kinase domain, is sufficient for formation of the medial tract. This is believed to be the first showing of a functional role

for the extracellular domain of a receptor tyrosine kinase which is independent of the catalytic kinase domain. A role for the transmembrane and juxtamembrane domains of *Nuk* protein cannot be ruled out as the chimeric *Nuk*- β -galactosidase fusion protein has these domains in addition to the extracellular domain.

5 In view of the importance of *Nuk* protein in the formation of the pars posterior medial tract, a detailed study of the expression of *Nuk* in this region of the brain was made by examining serial sections from the brains of *Nuk*²/*Nuk*² homozygous mice, which express a fusion protein comprising the *Nuk* extracellular transmembrane and juxtamembrane domains and β -galactosidase, which can readily be detected in sections based on a blue green coloration, as described herein. Sections were taken from the brains of *Nuk*²/*Nuk*² mice and newborn pups and from embryos at various stages of gestation.

Nuk was not found to be expressed in the pars posterior medial tract of embryonic or adult *Nuk*²/*Nuk*² mice. *Nuk* expression was absent dorsal to the medial tract but apparent in the cells ventral to and underlying the medial tract.

15 *Nuk* was generally found to be widely expressed in the brain, with an apparent increase in level posteriorly. Peripheral axons were found to express high levels of *Nuk*. In particular, the retinal ganglia cells of the eyes exhibited intense blue/green staining. The olfactory receptor neurons, the trigeminal ganglia and associated sensory whisker roots were also found to express *Nuk*. The corpus callosum, the thick stratum of transversely-directed nerve fibres which connects the two hemispheres of the brain, was also stained for *Nuk* expression.

Further information about the role of *Nuk* protein in axonal pathfinding was obtained from examining the brains of mice having double mutations in *Nuk* and in *Sek4*, another member of the *Eph* subfamily of receptor tyrosine kinases. Mice bearing a *Sek4* null mutation were prepared (Klein and Orioloi, European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Heidelberg, Germany). The *Sek4* null mice, similar to the *Nuk* null mice, exhibited no obvious morphological or behavioral defects. However, *Nuk*¹/*Sek4* double homozygous mutants died at birth. *Nuk*²/*Sek4* mice survived up to 3 months, confirming that *Nuk* protein plays a crucial role which is independent of its catalytic kinase domain.

30 An examination of coronal sections of the brains of newborn *Nuk*¹/*Sek4* mice showed that, in addition to the anterior commissure defect found in *Nuk*¹/*-* mice, the corpus callosum and habenular interpeduncle tracts were severely affected and failed to develop properly. The axon pathways affected in the *Nuk*/*Sek* double homozygotes is illustrated in Figure 10. The fibres of the anterior commissure appeared to be misdirected and oriented to the ventral-most floor of the brain. In addition, the fibres of the corpus callosum had not joined up across the midline, but had piled up against the lateral ventricles. *Nuk*,*-Lac Z* expression, based on blue/green staining, was detected in the mid line of the corpus callosum. The habenular interpeduncle tract which connects the thalamus to the ventral midbrain, was

defective in *Nuk²/Sek4* and *Nuk¹/Sek4*. Careful analysis of Nuk protein using anti-Nuk antibodies and *lac Z* staining of *Nuk²/Nuk²* embryos showed that, during development, *Nuk* expression appears in the ventral midbrain and progresses towards the thalamus and axon migration occurred in the opposite direction, i.e. from the thalamus toward the ventral mid brain. This axon migration was dependent on the expression of Nuk protein having a catalytic kinase domain.

Having illustrated and described the principles of the invention in a preferred embodiment, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the invention can be modified in arrangement and detail without departure from such principles. We claim all modifications coming within the scope of the following claims.

All publications, patents and patent applications referred to herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety to the same extent as if each individual publication, patent or patent application was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference in its entirety.

The following sequence listings form part of the application.

SEQUENCE LISTING

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(ii) TITLE OF INVENTION: **Method of Activating a Novel Ligand
Regulatory Pathway**

(iii) NUMBER OF SEQUENCES: 2

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(v) COMPUTER READABLE FORM:

(A) MEDIUM TYPE: Floppy disk
(B) COMPUTER: IBM PC compatible
(C) OPERATING SYSTEM: PC-DOS/MS-DOS
(D) SOFTWARE: PatentIn Release #1.0, Version #1.25

(vi) CURRENT APPLICATION DATA:

(A) APPLICATION NUMBER:
(B) FILING DATE:
(C) CLASSIFICATION:

(viii) ATTORNEY/AGENT INFORMATION:

(A) NAME: Kurdydyk, Linda M.
(B) REGISTRATION NUMBER: 34,971
(C) REFERENCE/DOCKET NUMBER: 3153-196

(ix) TELECOMMUNICATION INFORMATION:

(A) TELEPHONE: (416) 364-7311
(B) TELEFAX: (416) 361-1398
(C) TELEX: 06-23115

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:1:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

(A) LENGTH: 3105 base pairs

(B) TYPE: nucleic acid
 (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
 (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: cDNA

(vi) ORIGINAL SOURCE:

(A) ORGANISM: Mus musculus
 (D) DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE: Embryo

(vii) IMMEDIATE SOURCE:

(A) LIBRARY: lambda gt10 cDNA library
 (B) CLONE: Combined PnUKRACE A2 and K2 AND cDNA clones

(viii) POSITION IN GENOME:

(A) CHROMOSOME/SEGMENT: Distal end of chromosome 4
 (B) MAP POSITION: near the ahd-1 mutation

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:1:

ATGGGAGCCC GGGTCCCCGT TCTGCCCCGG CTGGATGGCT CATTCGCTG GCTGCTGCTG	60
CTGCCGCTGC TAGCCGCCGT GGAAGAAACC CTGATGGACT CTACGACAGC AACGGCTGAG	120
CTGGGCTGGA TGGTACATCC CCCATCAGGG TGGGAAGAGG TGAGCGGCTA CGACGAGAAC	180
ATGAACACTA TCCGTACCTA CCAGGTGTGC AATGTCTTTG AGTCAAGCCA GAACAACCTGG	240
CTGCGGACCA AATTCATCCG GCGCCGTGGC GCCCACCGTA TCCACGTGGA GATGAAGTTC	300
TCGGTGCGTG ACTGCAGCAG CATTCCCAGC GTGCCGGGCT CCTGCAAGGA GACCTTCAAC	360
CTCTACTACT ATGAGGCTGA TTTTGACTTA GCCACCAAAA CCTTTCCCAA CTGGATGGAG	420
AATCCGTGGG TGAAGGTGGA CACCATCGCG GCCGATGAGA GCTTCTCTCA GGTGGACCTG	480
GGTGGCCGCG TCATGAAAAT CAACACTGAG GTGCGAAGCT TCGGTCCTGT GTCCCGCAAT	540
GGTTTCTACC TGGCCTTCCA GGACTACGGC GGCTGTATGT CCCTCATTCG TGTGCGCGTC	600
TTCTACCGGA AGTGCCCCCG AATCATCCAG AATGGTGCCA TCTTCCAGGA GACACTATCG	660
GGGGCTGAGA GCACTTCGCT GGTGGCAGCT CGGGGCAGCT GCATCGCCAA TGCTGAAGAA	720
GTGGACGTGC CCATCAAACCT CTACTGTAAC GGGGACGGCG AATGGCTGGT GCCCATCGGT	780
CGCTGCATGT GCAAGGCGGG CTTCGAGGCT GTGGAGAACG GCACCGTCTG CCGAGGTGT	840
CCATCAGGAA CCTTCAAGGC CAACCAAGGG GACGAAGCCT GCACCCACTG TCCCATCAAC	900
AGCCGCACCA CCTCTGAGGG TGCCACCAAC TGTGTATGCC GCAACGGCTA CTACAGGGCC	960
GACCTGGACC CCTTAGACAT GCCTTGACA ACCATCCCCT CTGCGCCCCA GGCTGTGATC	1020
TCCAGCGTCA ACGAGACATC CCTCATGCTA GAGTGGACCC CACCCCGAGA CTCCGGGGGT	1080
CGCGAGGATC TTGTTTACAA CATCATCTGC AAGAGCTGTG GCTCCGGCCG GGGCGCATGC	1140
ACGCGCTGCG GGGACAACGT GCAGTACGCG CCCC GCCAGC TGGGCCTGAC TGAGCCGCGC	1200
ATCTACATCA GTGACCTGCT GGCACACACG CAGTACACCT TCGAGATCCA GGCCGTGAAT	1260
GGTGTGACCG ACCAGAGTCC CTTCTCACCT CAGTTGCTCT CTGTGAACAT CACCACCAAC	1320
CAAGCAGCAC CATCGGCCGT GTCCATCATG CACCAGGTGA GCCGCACTGT GGACAGCATC	1380
ACCCTGTCGT GGTCCCAGCC AGACCAGCCC AACGGTGTGA TCCTGGACTA CGAGCTGCAG	1440

TACTATGAGA AGGAGCTCAG TGAGTACAAC GCCACGGCCA TAAAAAGCCC CACCAACACA	1500
GTCAGTGTGC AGGGCCTCAA AGCCGGCGCC ATCTATGTCT TCCAGGTGCG GGCACGCACC	1560
GTTGCAGGCT ATGGGCGCTA CAGTGGCAAG ATGTACTTCC AAACCATGAC AGAAGCCGAG	1620
TACCAGACCA GCATCAAGGA AAAGCTACCC CTCATCGTTG GCTCCTCCGC CGCCGGCTTA	1680
GTCTTCCTCA TCGCTGTGGT CGTCATTGCC ATCGTATGTA ACAGACGGGG GTTTGAGCGT	1740
GCCGACTCAG AGTACACGGA CAAGCTACAG CACTACACCA GCGGACACAT GACCCCAGGC	1800
ATGAAGATCT ATATAGATCC TTTCACCTAT GAAGATCCTA ATGAGGCAGT GCGGGAGTTT	1860
GCCAAGGAAA TTGACATCTC CTGTGTCAAG ATTGAGCAGG TGATTGGAGC AGGGGAATTT	1920
GGTGAGGTCT GCAGTGGCCA TTTGAAGCTG CCAGGCAAGA GAGAGATCTT TGTAGCCATC	1980
AAGACCCTCA AGTCAGGATA CACGGAGAAA CAGCGCCGGG ACTTCCTGAG TGAGGCATCC	2040
ATCATGGGCC AGTTCGACCA CCCCAATGTC ATCCATCTGG AAGGGGTTGT CACCAAGAGC	2100
ACACCTGTCA TGATCATCAC TGAATTCATG GAGAATGGAT CTCTGGACTC CTTCTCCGG	2160
CAAAATGATG GGCAGTTCAC AGTCATCCAA CTGGTGGGCA TGCTGAGGGG CATTCAGGCC	2220
GGCATGAAGT ACCTGGCGGA CATGAACTAC GTGCACCGTG ACCTTGCTGC TCGAAACATC	2280
CTCGTCAACA GTAACCTGGT GTGTAAGGTG TCTGACTTTG GGCTCTCACG CTTCTGGAG	2340
GATGACACGT CTGACCCAC CTATACCAGC GCTCTGGGTG GGAAGATCCC CATCCGTTGG	2400
ACGGCACC GG AAGCCATCCA GTACCGGAAA TTCACCTCGG CCAGTGATGT GTGGAGCTAT	2460
GGCATCGTCA TGTGGGAGGT GATGTCTTAC GGGGAACGAC CCTACTGGGA CATGACCAAT	2520
CAAGACGTAA TCAACGCCAT TGAACAGGAC TACAGACTAC CTCCGCCCAT GGACTGCCCT	2580
AGCGCCCTGC ACCAGCTCAT GCTGGACTGC TGGCAGAAGG ACCGCAACCA CCGGCCCAAG	2640
TTCGGCCAGA TTGTCAACAC GCTGGACAAG ATGATCCGAA ACCCCAACAG CCTCAAAGCC	2700
ATGGCACCCC TGTCTCTGG CATCAACCTG CCACTGCTGG ACCGCACGAT ACCGGACTAC	2760
ACCAGCTTTA ACACAGTGGA TGAGTGGCTA GAGGCCATCA AGATGGGCCA GTACAAGGAG	2820
AGCTTTGCCA ACGCCGGCTT CACCTCTTTC GACGTTGTAT CTCAGATGAT GATGGAGGAC	2880
ATTCTCCGCG TTGGGGTCAC TCTAGCTGGC CACCAGAAAA AAATCCTGAA CAGTATCCAG	2940
GTGATGCGGG CCCAGATGAA CCAGATCCAG TCTGTAGAGG TTTGACATTC GCCTGCCTCG	3000
GTTCTCCTCT TCCTCCACGC CGCCCCTGAG CCCCTACGTC GGTCCCTGCT GCTCTGTCAC	3060
TGCAGGTCAG CACTGCCAGG AGGCCACAGA CAACAGGAAG ACCAA	3105

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:2:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:
 - (A) LENGTH: 994 amino acids
 - (B) TYPE: amino acid
 - (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
 - (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

- (ii) MOLECULE TYPE: protein

- (vi) ORIGINAL SOURCE:

(A) ORGANISM: Mus musculus
(D) DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE: Embryo

(vii) IMMEDIATE SOURCE:

(A) LIBRARY: lamda gt10 cDNA library
(B) CLONE: Combined pNukRACE A2 and K2 and cDNA clones

(viii) POSITION IN GENOME:

(A) CHROMOSOME/SEGMENT: Distal end of chromosome 4
(B) MAP POSITION: near the ahd-1 mutation

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:2:

Met	Gly	Ala	Arg	Val	Pro	Val	Leu	Pro	Gly	Leu	Asp	Gly	Ser	Phe	Cys	1	5	10	15
Trp	Leu	Leu	Leu	Leu	Pro	Leu	Leu	Ala	Ala	Val	Glu	Glu	Thr	Leu	Met	20	25	30	
Asp	Ser	Thr	Thr	Ala	Thr	Ala	Glu	Leu	Gly	Trp	Met	Val	His	Pro	Pro	35	40	45	
Ser	Gly	Trp	Glu	Glu	Val	Ser	Gly	Tyr	Asp	Glu	Asn	Met	Asn	Thr	Ile	50	55	60	
Arg	Thr	Tyr	Gln	Val	Cys	Asn	Val	Phe	Glu	Ser	Ser	Gln	Asn	Asn	Trp	65	70	75	80
Leu	Arg	Thr	Lys	Phe	Ile	Arg	Arg	Arg	Gly	Ala	His	Arg	Ile	His	Val	85	90	95	
Glu	Met	Lys	Phe	Ser	Val	Arg	Asp	Cys	Ser	Ser	Ile	Pro	Ser	Val	Pro	100	105	110	
Gly	Ser	Cys	Lys	Glu	Thr	Phe	Asn	Leu	Tyr	Tyr	Tyr	Glu	Ala	Asp	Phe	115	120	125	
Asp	Leu	Ala	Thr	Lys	Thr	Phe	Pro	Asn	Trp	Met	Glu	Asn	Pro	Trp	Val	130	135	140	
Lys	Val	Asp	Thr	Ile	Ala	Ala	Asp	Glu	Ser	Phe	Ser	Gln	Val	Asp	Leu	145	150	155	160
Gly	Gly	Arg	Val	Met	Lys	Ile	Asn	Thr	Glu	Val	Arg	Ser	Phe	Gly	Pro	165	170	175	
Val	Ser	Arg	Asn	Gly	Phe	Tyr	Leu	Ala	Phe	Gln	Asp	Tyr	Gly	Gly	Cys	180	185	190	
Met	Ser	Leu	Ile	Ala	Val	Arg	Val	Phe	Tyr	Arg	Lys	Cys	Pro	Arg	Ile	195	200	205	
Ile	Gln	Asn	Gly	Ala	Ile	Phe	Gln	Glu	Thr	Leu	Ser	Gly	Ala	Glu	Ser	210	215	220	
Thr	Ser	Leu	Val	Ala	Ala	Arg	Gly	Ser	Cys	Ile	Ala	Asn	Ala	Glu	Glu	225	230	235	240
Val	Asp	Val	Pro	Ile	Lys	Leu	Tyr	Cys	Asn	Gly	Asp	Gly	Glu	Trp	Leu	245	250	255	
Val	Pro	Ile	Gly	Arg	Cys	Met	Cys	Lys	Ala	Gly	Phe	Glu	Ala	Val	Glu	260	265	270	
Asn	Gly	Thr	Val	Cys	Arg	Gly	Cys	Pro	Ser	Gly	Thr	Phe	Lys	Ala	Asn	275	280	285	

Gln Gly Asp Glu Ala Cys Thr His Cys Pro Ile Asn Ser Arg Thr Thr
 290 295 300
 Ser Glu Gly Ala Thr Asn Cys Val Cys Arg Asn Gly Tyr Tyr Arg Ala
 305 310 315 320
 Asp Leu Asp Pro Leu Asp Met Pro Cys Thr Thr Ile Pro Ser Ala Pro
 325 330 335
 Gln Ala Val Ile Ser Ser Val Asn Glu Thr Ser Leu Met Leu Glu Trp
 340 345 350
 Thr Pro Pro Arg Asp Ser Gly Gly Arg Glu Asp Leu Val Tyr Asn Ile
 355 360 365
 Ile Cys Lys Ser Cys Gly Ser Gly Arg Gly Ala Cys Thr Arg Cys Gly
 370 375 380
 Asp Asn Val Gln Tyr Ala Pro Arg Gln Leu Gly Leu Thr Glu Pro Arg
 385 390 395 400
 Ile Tyr Ile Ser Asp Leu Leu Ala His Thr Gln Tyr Thr Phe Glu Ile
 405 410 415
 Gln Ala Val Asn Gly Val Thr Asp Gln Ser Pro Phe Ser Pro Gln Phe
 420 425 430
 Ala Ser Val Asn Ile Thr Thr Asn Gln Ala Ala Pro Ser Ala Val Ser
 435 440 445
 Ile Met His Gln Val Ser Arg Thr Val Asp Ser Ile Thr Leu Ser Trp
 450 455 460
 Ser Gln Pro Asp Gln Pro Asn Gly Val Ile Leu Asp Tyr Glu Leu Gln
 465 470 475 480
 Tyr Tyr Glu Lys Glu Leu Ser Glu Tyr Asn Ala Thr Ala Ile Lys Ser
 485 490 495
 Pro Thr Asn Thr Val Thr Val Gln Gly Leu Lys Ala Gly Ala Ile Tyr
 500 505 510
 Val Phe Gln Val Arg Ala Arg Thr Val Ala Gly Tyr Gly Arg Tyr Ser
 515 520 525
 Gly Lys Met Tyr Phe Gln Thr Met Thr Glu Ala Glu Tyr Gln Thr Ser
 530 535 540
 Ile Lys Glu Lys Leu Pro Leu Ile Val Gly Ser Ser Ala Ala Gly Leu
 545 550 555 560
 Val Phe Leu Ile Ala Val Val Val Ile Ala Ile Val Cys Asn Arg Arg
 565 570 575
 Gly Phe Glu Arg Ala Asp Ser Glu Tyr Thr Asp Lys Leu Gln His Tyr
 580 585 590
 Thr Ser Gly His Met Thr Pro Gly Met Lys Ile Tyr Ile Asp Pro Phe
 595 600 605
 Thr Tyr Glu Asp Pro Asn Glu Ala Val Arg Glu Phe Ala Lys Glu Ile
 610 615 620
 Asp Ile Ser Cys Val Lys Ile Glu Gln Val Ile Gly Ala Gly Glu Phe
 625 630 635 640
 Gly Glu Val Cys Ser Gly His Leu Lys Leu Pro Gly Lys Arg Glu Ile

645										650					655				
Phe	Val	Ala	Ile	Lys	Thr	Leu	Lys	Ser	Gly	Tyr	Thr	Glu	Lys	Gln	Arg				
			660					665					670						
Arg	Asp	Phe	Leu	Ser	Glu	Ala	Ser	Ile	Met	Gly	Gln	Phe	Asp	His	Pro				
		675					680					685							
Asn	Val	Ile	His	Leu	Glu	Gly	Val	Val	Thr	Lys	Ser	Thr	Pro	Val	Met				
		690				695					700								
Ile	Ile	Thr	Glu	Phe	Met	Glu	Asn	Gly	Ser	Leu	Asp	Ser	Phe	Leu	Arg				
					710						715				720				
Gln	Asn	Asp	Gly	Gln	Phe	Thr	Val	Ile	Gln	Leu	Val	Gly	Met	Leu	Arg				
					725				730					735					
Gly	Ile	Ala	Ala	Gly	Met	Lys	Tyr	Leu	Ala	Asp	Met	Asn	Tyr	Val	His				
			740					745					750						
Arg	Asp	Leu	Ala	Ala	Arg	Asn	Ile	Leu	Val	Asn	Ser	Asn	Leu	Val	Cys				
		755				760						765							
Lys	Val	Ser	Asp	Phe	Gly	Leu	Ser	Arg	Phe	Leu	Glu	Asp	Asp	Thr	Ser				
		770				775					780								
Asp	Pro	Thr	Tyr	Thr	Ser	Ala	Leu	Gly	Gly	Lys	Ile	Pro	Ile	Arg	Trp				
					790						795				800				
Thr	Ala	Pro	Glu	Ala	Ile	Gln	Tyr	Arg	Lys	Phe	Thr	Ser	Ala	Ser	Asp				
				805					810					815					
Val	Trp	Ser	Tyr	Gly	Ile	Val	Met	Trp	Glu	Val	Met	Ser	Tyr	Gly	Glu				
			820					825					830						
Arg	Pro	Tyr	Trp	Asp	Met	Thr	Asn	Gln	Asp	Val	Ile	Asn	Ala	Ile	Glu				
		835					840					845							
Gln	Asp	Tyr	Arg	Leu	Pro	Pro	Pro	Met	Asp	Cys	Pro	Ser	Ala	Leu	His				
		850				855					860								
Gln	Leu	Met	Leu	Asp	Cys	Trp	Gln	Lys	Asp	Arg	Asn	His	Arg	Pro	Lys				
					870						875				880				
Phe	Gly	Gln	Ile	Val	Asn	Thr	Leu	Asp	Lys	Met	Ile	Arg	Asn	Pro	Asn				
				885					890					895					
Ser	Leu	Lys	Ala	Met	Ala	Pro	Leu	Ser	Ser	Gly	Ile	Asn	Leu	Pro	Leu				
			900					905					910						
Leu	Asp	Arg	Thr	Ile	Pro	Asp	Tyr	Thr	Ser	Phe	Asn	Thr	Val	Asp	Glu				
		915					920					925							
Trp	Leu	Glu	Ala	Ile	Lys	Met	Gly	Gln	Tyr	Lys	Glu	Ser	Phe	Ala	Asn				
		930				935					940								
Ala	Gly	Phe	Thr	Ser	Phe	Asp	Val	Val	Ser	Gln	Met	Met	Met	Glu	Asp				
					950						955				960				
Ile	Leu	Arg	Val	Gly	Val	Thr	Leu	Ala	Gly	His	Gln	Lys	Lys	Ile	Leu				
				965					970					975					
Asn	Ser	Ile	Gln	Val	Met	Arg	Ala	Gln	Met	Asn	Gln	Ile	Gln	Ser	Val				
			980					985					990						
Glu	Val																		

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of activating a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell, comprising reacting an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein with a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph
5 subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase on the cell surface thereby activating the ligand regulatory pathway in the cell.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the protein or part of the protein is lacking in catalytic kinase activity.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the part of the protein comprises an
10 extracellular domain of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase.
4. A method for identifying a substance which is capable of binding to a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase and activating a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell, comprising reacting a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase with at least one substance which potentially can bind with the ligand, under conditions
15 which permit the formation of substance-ligand complexes, and assaying for substance-ligand complexes, for free substance, for non-complexed ligands, or for activation of the ligand.
5. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein activation of the ligand is assayed by measuring phosphorylation of the ligand or binding of SH2 domains to the ligand, or by assaying for a biological affect on the cell.
- 20 6. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein the substance is an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein.
7. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein the part of the protein comprises an extracellular domain.
- 25 8. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein the biological affect on the cell is inhibition or stimulation of proliferation, differentiation or migration.
9. A method for assaying a medium for an agonist or antagonist of a ligand regulatory pathway in a cell which comprises providing a cell expressing a ligand for an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase on the cell surface, reacting the cell with an Eph subfamily receptor

tyrosine kinase protein and a suspected agonist or antagonist under conditions which permit the formation of ligand-receptor tyrosine kinase protein complexes on the cell surface, and assaying for ligand-receptor tyrosine kinase protein complexes, for free receptor tyrosine kinase protein, for non-complexed proteins, for activation of the receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or for activation of the ligand.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein activation of the ligand is assayed by measuring phosphorylation of the ligand or binding of SH2 domains to the ligand or by assaying for a biological affect on the cell.

11. A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the biological affect on the cell is inhibition or stimulation of proliferation, differentiation or migration.

12. A method for affecting neuronal development or regeneration in a mammal comprising administering to a mammal an effective amount of a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein.

13. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein the part of the protein comprises an extracellular domain of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase.

14. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein the protein or part of the protein is lacking in a catalytic kinase domain.

15. A method for stimulating or inhibiting axonogenesis in a mammal comprising administering to a mammal an effective amount of a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein, or an isoform or a part of the protein having at least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein.

16. A method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the part of the protein comprises about an extracellular domain of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase.

17. A method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the protein or part of the protein is lacking in a catalytic kinase domain.

18. A pharmaceutical composition which comprises a purified and isolated Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase protein or an isoform or a part of the protein having at

least 20 contiguous amino acids of the protein for affecting neuronal development or regeneration and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent or excipient.

19. A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 18 wherein the part of the protein comprises an extracellular domain of an Eph subfamily receptor tyrosine kinase.
- 5 20. A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 18 wherein the protein or part of the protein is lacking in a catalytic kinase domain.

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FIGURE 1

b

CONS ngvildyEvkyekdqers.y.i.t.t.vt..glpk.t.Yv.qvrtartaaGyGpfer.h..efet.epp.s..s..s..v.iv.vaagvlllvw
 EPH PGANLTYE...LHVLNQDEERYQM.VLEPR.VLLTELQPDTTYIVRVRMLTFLQPGPFSFDH..EFRT.SPPVSRGLTQGE~~TVAVIPQLLIGAAALLQTL~~
 ECK QSRVWKYEV.TYRKKGDSNS.YNVRTEGFSVTLLDAPDPTYLVQVQALTOEGGAGSKVH..EFOTLSPEGSQH.....~~LAVIGQVAVGVVLLVLA~~
 HEK4 NGIILDYEVKYEKQEQETS.YTILRARGTNVTISSLKPDITYVLQIRARTAAAGVGTNSRKF..EFET.SPDSFISIGESSQVMTAISAAVATILLTVY
 HEK5 NGVILDYELQYKELSEYNATAIESP.TNTVTVQGLKAGAIYVQVRRARTVAGYGRYSGRM..YFQTMTEAYQTSIQEKLPL~~LIGSSAAGVTVVLA~~
 HEK7 NGIILEYIIXHFENDQETS..YTIISKETTITAGGLKPAISVYVQIRARTAAAGVGFVSRF..EFET.TPVFAASSDQSQ~~IPVLAISVTVGVVLA~~
 HEK8 NGVILEYEVKYEKDQNER.SYRIVRTAARNTDINGLNPLTSYVTVRARTAAAGVDFSEPL..EVTNTVPSRIIGDGANSTV~~LVSVSOSVTVVLA~~
 HEK2 NGVILDYENKHYFEK.SEGIASTVTSQMSVQDGLRDPAR..YVVQVRRARTVAGYGYSRPA..EFTTTSERGS..GAQQLQEQ~~PLTVGSATAGVTVV~~
 HEK11 NGVITEYEIKYKEDQERT.YSTVTKTSASINNLKPGVYVTVQIRAFRTAAGYGRYSPLRDLVATLEATGMFEATVSSQ~~QVYIIVAVVAVQVLA~~
 HTK SGAWLDYEVKYHEKAGPSSVRFLKTSERNAELRGLRGASVYLQVVRAREAGYGPFGQH.....HSQTQLDESEGWREQL~~ALIACTAVVGVTVVLA~~

CONS vvvv..rrrg.yerakq.d.e.eekdqhy...ilpglktYiDpftYEDPnqavrefakEidaac.kiekViGaGEPGEVcsGrLklp.gkre..VAIKT
 EPH ~~YTSRRRAQRQRQR~~.....QRDRATDVOREDLWLKPYVDLQAYEDPAQALDPR.ELDPALMVDTVIGEGFGEVYRGLRLPS.QDCKTVAIKT
 ECK ~~QVGFPIHRRRQRQRARQ~~.....SPEDVYFSKSEQLKPLKTYVDPTHYEDPNAQAVLKFTTEIHPSCVTRQKVI GAGEFGEVYKGLKTS~~SGKKEVPAIKT~~
 HEK4 ~~IXVILGRFCGYSKHG.ADE..KRLHFGNGLK.LPGLRTYVDPTHYEDPTQAVHEFAKELDATNISIDKVVGAGEFGEVCSGRLLKPS.KKEISVAIKT~~
 HEK5 ~~VIAIVCNRRGF~~...ERADSEYTDLQHYTSGHITPGMKIYIDPPTYEDPNEAVREFAKEIDISCVKIEQVIGAGEFGEVCSGHLKLP.GREIIPVAIKT
 HEK7 ~~QVLLSGRRCG.YSKAQDPE..EEMGHFNGHILKPGVRTYIDPPTYEDPNAQAVHEFAKELASCTIERVIGAGEFGEVCSGRLLKLP.GKRELPAIKT~~
 HEK8 ~~AAFPVSRRRSKYSKAKQAD..EEK.H.....LNQGVRTYVDPPTYEDPNAQAVREFAKEIDASCIEKIEKVIGAGEFGEVCSGRLLKVP.GKREICVAIKT~~
 HEK2 ~~AVVV..IAIVCLRKQRHGSSEYTEKLQY~~...IAPGMKVYIDPPTYEDPNEAVREFAKEIDVS CVKIEEVI GAGEFGEVCRGLKQP.GRREVPVAIKT
 HEK11 ~~AVTVVP.GPIIGRRHCOYTKADQEGDEELYPHFKPGTKTYIDPPTYEDPNRAVHQFAKELDASCIEKIEKVIGAGEFGEVCSGRLLKLP.GKRDVVAIKT~~
 HTK ~~VIVVA.....VLCLRKQSGNREAEYSDKHQY.LIGHGTKVYIDPPTYEDPNEAVREFAKEIDVS YVKIEEVI GAGEFGEVCRGLKAP.GKKECVAIKT~~

CONS LKvgyteKQrrdFlEaEaIMGQFDHpnihLEGVvtkakPvMiicEfMENGALdsFLrknndgqftviQLVgMLrGlaaGmKYLedmnYVHRDLAARNILV
 EPH LKDTSPGGQWNNFLREATIMGQFSHPHILHLEGVVTKRKPIMIITEFMENALDAFLREREDQLVPOQLVAMLQGIASGMHYLSNMHYVHRDLAARNILV
 ECK LEAGYTEKQRRVDFLGEAGIMGQFSHPHILHLEGVTSKYKPMIITEFMENALDKFLREKDGFTSVLQVGMRLGIAAGMKYLANMHYVHRDLAARNILV
 HEK4 LEVGYTERQRDRFLGEASIMGQFDHPNIIRLEGVVTKSKPMIITEFMENGSLSFLRQNDGQFTVIQLVGMRLGIAAGMKYLSDMGYVHRDLAARNILV
 HEK5 LKSGYTEKQRRDFLSEASIMGQFDHPNIIRLEGVVTKSTPMIITEFMENGSLSFLRQNDGQFTVIQLVGMRLGIAAGMKYLANMHYVHRDLAARNILV
 HEK7 LKVGYTEKQRRDFLGEASIMGQFDHPNIIRLEGVVTKSKPMIITEFMENGSLSFLRQNDGQFTVIQLVGMRLGIAAGMKYLSDMGYVHRDLAARNILV
 HEK8 LKAGYTEKQRRDFLSEASIMGQFDHPNIIRLEGVVTKSKPMIITEFMENGSLSDAFLRQNDGQFTVIQLVGMRLGIAAGMKYLSDMGYVHRDLAARNILV
 HEK2 LKVGYTEKQRRDFLSEASIMGQFDHPNIIRLEGVVTKSRPMIITEFMENCALDSFLRQNDGQFTVIQLVGMRLGIAAGMKYLSDMGYVHRDLAARNILV
 HEK11 LKVGYTEKQRRDFLSEASIMGQFDHPNIIRLEGVVTKSRPMIITEFMENCALDSFLRQNDGQFTVIQLVGMRLGIAAGMKYLSDMGYVHRDLAARNILV
 HTK LKGGYTEKQRRDFLSEASIMGQFHPNIIRLEGVVTKSRPMIITEFMENCALDSFLRQNDGQFTVIQLVGMRLGIAAGMKYLAEMSYVHRDLAARNILV

CONS NnLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.peatyT.t.GGKIPIRWTAPEAIayrkFTsASDvWSyGIVmWEVmsyGerPYwmsNqdVikaiegyRLPpPdCPaa
 EPH NQNLCKVSDFGLSrVledd.DFDGTIYET..GGKIPIRWTAPEAIARHIFTTASDVWSFGIVMWEVLSFGDKPYGEMSNQEVMSIEDGYRLPPPDPCPAP
 ECK NSNLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.PEAYTT.TGGKIPIRWTAPEAIAYRKFTSASDVWSFGIVMWEVMSYGERPYWELSNHEVMSIAINDGFLPTPHDCPSA
 HEK4 NSNLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.PEAYTT.TGGKIPIRWTSPEAIAYRKFTSASDVWSYGIIVMWEVMSYGERPYWELSNQDVIKAVDEGYRLPPPDPCPAA
 HEK5 NSNLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.DSDPTYSALOGKFPPIRWTAPEAIQYRKFTSASDVWSYGIIVMWEVMSYGERPYWELSNQDVINAIDQDYRLPPPDPCPSA
 HEK7 NSNLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.PEAYTT.TGGKIPIRWTAPEAIAYRKFTSASDVWSYGIIVMWEVMSYGERPYWELSNQDVIKAVDEGYRLPPPDPCPAA
 HEK8 NSNLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.PEAYTT.TGGKIPIRWTAPEAIAYRKFTSASDVWSYGIIVMWEVMSYGERPYWELSNQDVIKAVDEGYRLPPPDPCPAA
 HEK2 NSNLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.DSDPTYSALOGKFPPIRWTAPEAIAYRKFTSASDVWSYGIIVMWEVMSYGERPYWELSNQDVINAIDQDYRLPPPDPCPTA
 HEK11 NSNLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.PEAYTT.TGGKIPIRWTAPEAIAYRKFTSASDVWSYGIIVMWEVMSYGERPYWELSNQDVIKAVDEGYRLPPPDPCPAG
 HTK NSNLVCKVSDFGLSrVledd.DSDPTYSALOGKFPPIRWTAPEAIAYRKFTSASDVWSYGIIVMWEVMSYGERPYWELSNQDVINAIDQDYRLPPPDPCPTS

CONS lhqLMldCWqkdRnrRpkf.qivniLdkliRnpSLktia.aasr.s.pLldqegpdy..frtvgwLeaikmgryke.Ftaagytafe.vaqmtaeDl1
 EPH LYELMKNQCMAYDRARRPHFQKLQAHLEQLANPHSLRTIANDPRTVLRPLSLSGSDGIPYRTVSEWLESIRMKRYILHFSAGLDMECVLELTAEEDLT
 ECK LYQLMOCWQKERARRPKFADIVSILDKLIRAPDSLKTADFPVRSIRLPTSGSEGVFPRTVSEWLESIRMKRYILHFSAGLDMECVLELTAEEDLT
 HEK4 LYQLMOCWQKDRNRPKFEQIVSILDKLIRNPGSLKITSAAARPSNLLLDQSNVDISTFRTTGOWLNGVTRARCKEIPFGVEYSSCDTIAKISTDDMK
 HEK5 LHQLMOCWQKDRNRPKFQIVNTLDKIRNPNLSLKAMAPLSSGINPLLDRTIPDYSFNTVDEWLEAIKMGQYKESFANAGFTSFDVVSQMMEDIL
 HEK7 LYQLMOCWQKERNRPFKEIVNGLDKLIRNPNLSLKTVMASCRVSNLLAEHSPLGSGAYRSVGEWLEAIKMGRYTEIPFENGYSMDDAVQVTLLEDLR
 HEK8 LHQLMOCWQKERSDRPKFQIVNGLDKLIRNPNLSLKTOTESSRPNALDPSPEFSAVSVGDWLEAIKMGRYKDNFTAAAGYTTLEAVVHVNQEDLA
 HEK2 LHQLMOCWVRDRNRLPKFSQIVNTLDKIRNPNLSLKAMAPLSSGINPLLDRTIPDYSFNTVDEWLEAIKMGRYKESFVSAFASFDLVQMTAEEDLL
 HEK11 LHQLMOCWQKERAERPKFEQIVNGLDKLIRNPNLSLKTPLGTCRPSPLLDQNTPDFTTFCVGEWLEAIKMGRYKDNFTAAAGYNSLESVARNITIEDVM
 HTK LHQLMOCWQKDRNRPRFPQVVSALDKIRNPNLSLKTIVARENGGASHPLLDQRPQPHYSAFSGVGEWLEAIKMGRYEARFAAGFGSFELVSQISAEDLL

CONS riGvtl.ghQkkileSiq.a..Qmnggh.pgv.vPAPQY
 EPH QHCITLPGHQKRIILCSIQGFKD
 ECK RIGVRLPGHQKRIAYSLLGLKQVNTVGIPI
 HEK4 RVGVTVVQPKKIISIKALETQSKNGPVPV
 HEK5 RVGVTLAGHQKKILNSIQVMRAQMNQIQSVEV
 HEK7 RLGVTLVGHQKKIMNSLQEMKVQLVNGVPL
 HEK8 RIGITAITHQKILSSVQAMRTQMOMHGRMVPV
 HEK2 RIGVTLAGHQKKILSSIQDMRLQMNQTLPPVQV
 HEK11 SLGITLVGHQKKIMNSIQTHRAQMLKHLHGTQIQV
 HTK RIGVTLAGHQKKILASVQMKSQAKPOTPGTGGPAPQY

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FIGURE 2

ATGGGAGCCCGGGTCCCCGTTCTGCCCCGGGCTGGATGGCTCATTCTGCTGGCTGCTGCTG 60
CTGCCGCTGCTAGCCGCCGTGGAAGAAACCTGATGGACTCTACGACAGCAACGGCTGAG 120
CTGGGCTGGATGGTACATCCCCATCAGGGTGGGAAGAGGTGAGCGGCTACGACGAGAAC 180
ATGAACACTATCCGTACCTACCAGGTGTGCAATGTCTTTGAGTCAAGCCAGAACAACCTGG 240
CTGCGGACCAAATTCATCCGGCGCCGTGGCGCCCACCGTATCCACGTGGAGATGAAGTTC 300
TCGGTGCGTGACTGCAGCAGCATTCCCAGCGTGCCGGGCTCCTGCAAGGAGACCTTCAAC 360
CTCTACTACTATGAGGCTGATTTTGACTTAGCCACCAAAACCTTTCCCAACTGGATGGAG 420
AATCCGTGGGTGAAGGTGGACACCATCGCGGCCGATGAGAGCTTCTCTCAGGTGGACCTG 480
GGTGCCCGCGTCATGAAAATCAACACTGAGGTGCGAAGCTTCGGTCCTGTGTCCCGCAAT 540
GGTTTCTACCTGGCCTTCCAGGACTACGGCGGCTGTATGTCCCTCATTGCTGTGCGCGTC 600
TTCTACCGGAAGTGCCCCCGAATCATCCAGAATGGTGCCATCTTCCAGGAGACACTATCG 660
GGGGCTGAGAGCACTTCGCTGGTGGCAGCTCGGGGCAGCTGCATCGCCAATGCTGAAGAA 720
GTGGACGTGCCCATCAAACCTCTACTGTAACGGGGACGGCGAATGGCTGGTGGCCATCGGT 780
CGCTGCATGTGCAAGGCGGGCTTCGAGGCTGTGGAGAACGGCACCGTCTGCCGAGGTGT 840
CCATCAGGAACCTTCAAGGCCAACCAAGGGGACGAAGCCTGCACCCACTGTCCCATCAAC 900
AGCCGCACCACCTCTGAGGGTGCCACCAACTGTGTATGCCGCAACGGCTACTACAGGGCC 960
GACCTGGACCCCTTAGACATGCCTTGACACAACCATCCCCTCTGCGCCCCAGGCTGTGATC 1020
TCCAGCGTCAACGAGACATCCCTCATGCTAGAGTGGACCCACCCCGAGACTCCGGGGGT 1080
CGCGAGGATCTTGTTTACAACATCATCTGCAAGAGCTGTGGCTCCGGCCGGGGCGCATGC 1140
ACGCGCTGCGGGGACAACGTGCAGTACGCGCCCCGCCAGCTGGGCCTGACTGAGCCGCGC 1200
ATCTACATCAGTGACCTGCTGGCACACACGCAGTACACCTTCGAGATCCAGGCCGTGAAT 1260
GGTGTGACCGACCAGAGTCCCTTCTCACCTCAGTTCGCCTCTGTGAACATCACCACCAAC 1320
CAAGCAGCACCATCGGCCGTGTCCATCATGCACCAGGTGAGCCGCACTGTGGACAGCATC 1380
ACCCTGTCTGGTCCCAGCCAGACCAGCCCAACGGTGTGATCCTGGACTACGAGCTGCAG 1440
TACTATGAGAAGGAGCTCAGTGAGTACAACGCCACGGCCATAAAAAGCCCCACCAACACA 1500
GTCACTGTGCAGGGCCTCAAAGCCGGCGCCATCTATGTCTTCCAGGTGCGGGCACGCACC 1560

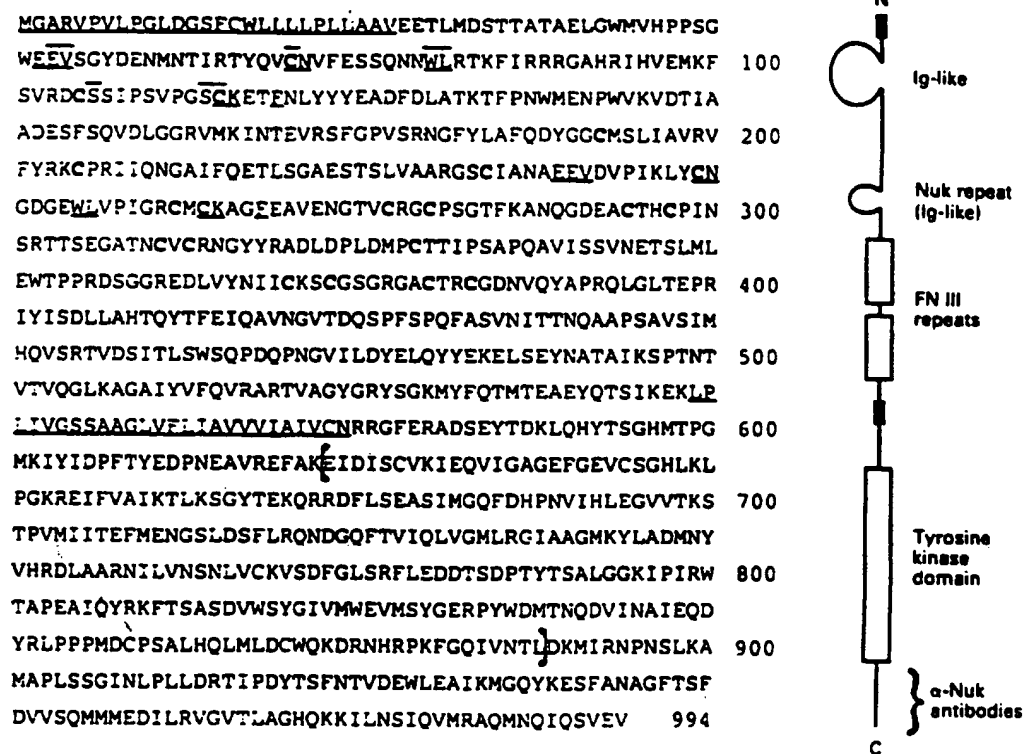
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FIGURE 2 (cont'd)

GTTGCAGGCTATGGGCGCTACAGTGGCAAGATGTACTTCCAAACCATGACAGAAGCCGAG	1620
TACCAGACCAGCATCAAGGAAAAGCTACCCCTCATCGTTGGCTCCTCCGCCGCCGGCTTA	1680
GTCTTCCTCATCGCTGTGGTCGTCATTGCCATCGTATGTAACAGACGGGGGTTTGAGCGT	1740
GCCGACTCAGAGTACACGGACAAGCTACAGCACTACACCAGCGGACACATGACCCAGGC	1800
ATGAAGATCTATATAGATCCTTTACCTATGAAGATCCTAATGAGGCAGTGCGGGAGTTT	1860
GCCAAGGAAATTGACATCTCCTGTGTCAAGATTGAGCAGGTGATTGGAGCAGGGGAATTT	1920
GGTGAGGTCTGCAGTGGCCATTTGAAGCTGCCAGGCAAGAGAGAGATCTTTGTAGCCATC	1980
AAGACCCTCAAGTCAGGATACACGGAGAAACAGCGCCGGGACTTCCTGAGTGAGGCATCC	2040
ATCATGGGCCAGTTTCGACCACCCCAATGTCATCCATCTGGAAGGGGTGTACCAAGAGC	2100
ACACCTGTCATGATCATCACTGAATTCATGGAGAATGGATCTCTGGACTCCTTCCTCCGG	2160
CAAAATGATGGGCAGTTCACAGTCATCCAACCTGGTGGGCATGCTGAGGGGCATTGCAGCC	2220
GGCATGAAGTACCTGGCGGACATGAACTACGTGCACCGTGACCTTGCTGCTCGAAACATC	2280
CTCGTCAACAGTAACCTGGTGTGTAAGGTGTCTGACTTTGGGCTCTCACGCTTCCTGGAG	2340
GATGACACGTCTGAGCCACCTATAACCAGCGCTCTGGGTGGGAAGATCCCCATCCGTTGG	2400
ACGGCACCGGAAGCCATCCAGTACCGGAAATTCACCTCGGCCAGTGATGTGTGGAGCTAT	2460
GGCATCGTCATGTGGGAGGTGATGTCTACGGGGAACGACCCTACTGGGACATGACCAAT	2520
CAAGACGTAATCAACGCCATTGAACAGGACTACAGACTACCTCCGCCCATGGACTGCCCT	2580
AGCGCCCTGCACCAGCTCATGCTGGACTGCTGGCAGAAGGACCGCAACCACCGGCCAAG	2640
TTCGGCCAGATTGTCAACACGCTGGACAAGATGATCCGAAACCCCAACAGCCTCAAAGCC	2700
ATGGCACCCCTGTCTCTGGCATCAACCTGCCACTGCTGGACCGCACGATACCGGACTAC	2760
ACCAGCTTTAACACAGTGGATGAGTGGCTAGAGGCCATCAAGATGGGCCAGTACAAGGAG	2820
AGCTTTGCCAACGCCGGCTTCACCTCTTCGACGTTGTATCTCAGATGATGATGGAGGAC	2880
ATTCTCCGCGTTGGGGTCACTCTAGCTGGCCACCAGAAAAAATCCTGAACAGTATCCAG	2940
GTGATGCGGGCCCAGATGAACCAGATCCAGTCTGTAGAGGTTTGACATTCGCCTGCCTCG	3000
GTTCTCCTCTTCCTCCACGCCGCCCTGAGCCCCTACGTCGGTCCCTGCTGCTCTGTAC	3060
TGCAGGTCAGCACTGCCAGGAGGCCACAGACAACAGGAAGACCAA	3105

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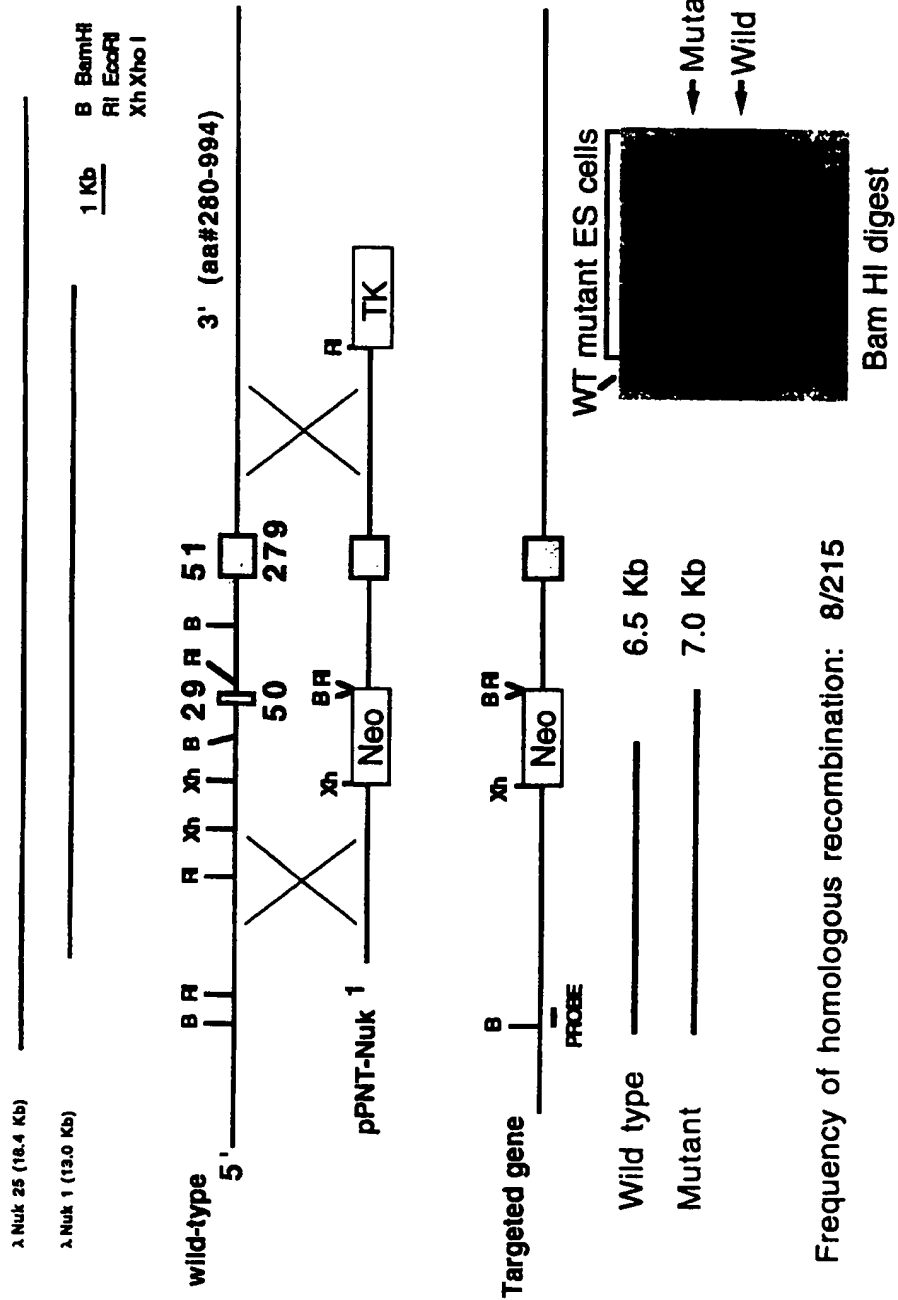
FIGURE 3



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FIGURE 4

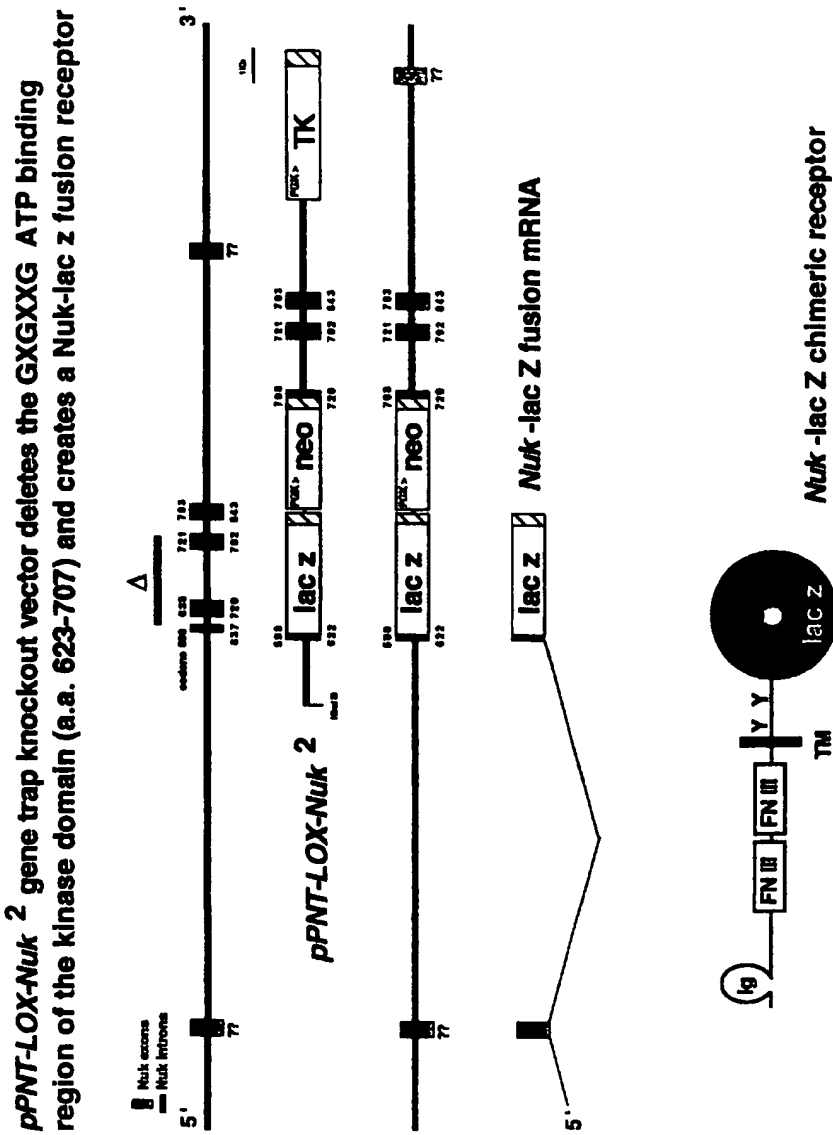
Nuk gene targeting: deletion of exon 2 (codons 29 to 50).



Frequency of homologous recombination: 8/215

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FIGURE 5



Frequency of homologous recombination: 3/118

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FIGURE 6A

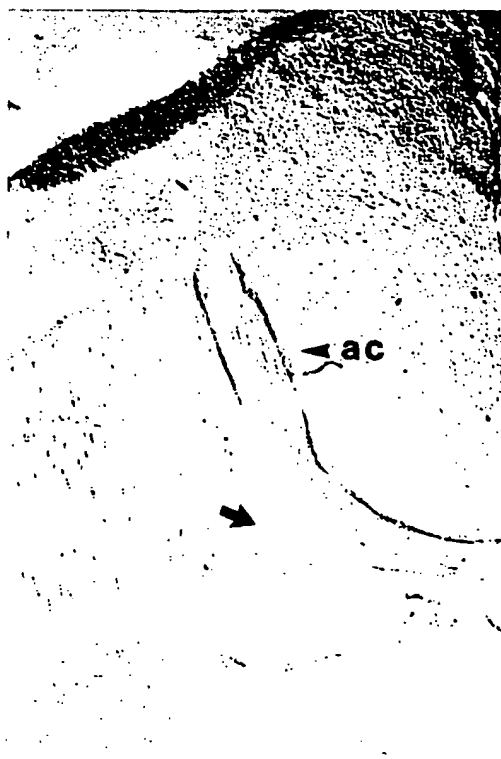
Nuk¹/+



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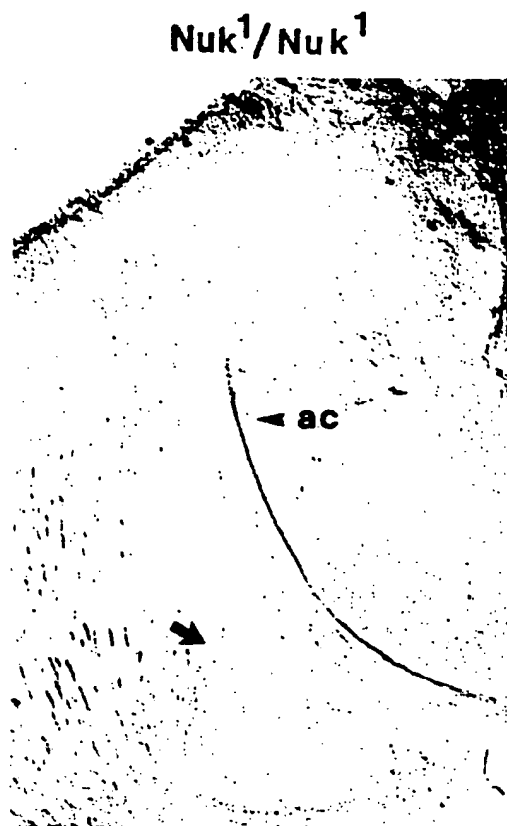
FIGURE 6B

Nuk^1/Nuk^1



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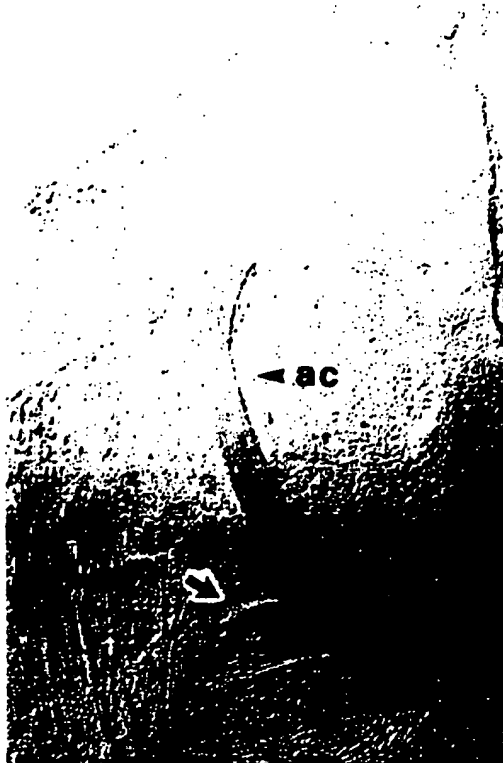
FIGURE 6C



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FIGURE 6D

$\text{Nuk}^2 / \text{Nuk}^2$



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FIGURE 7A



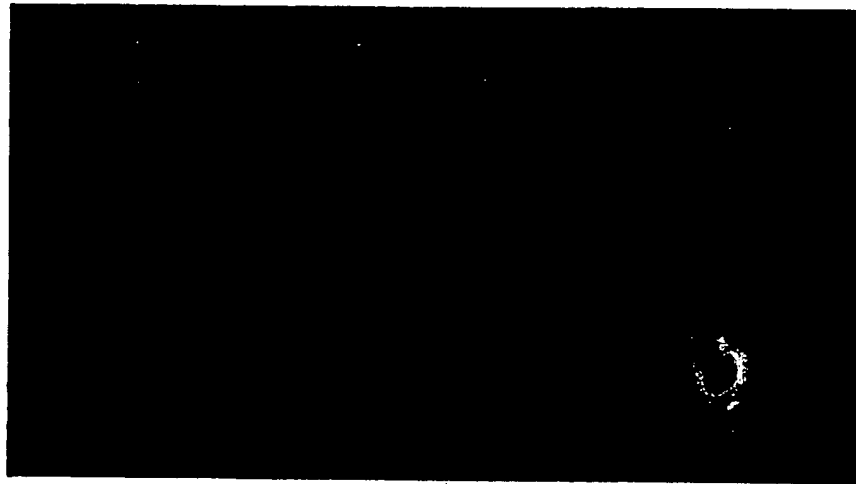
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FIGURE 7B

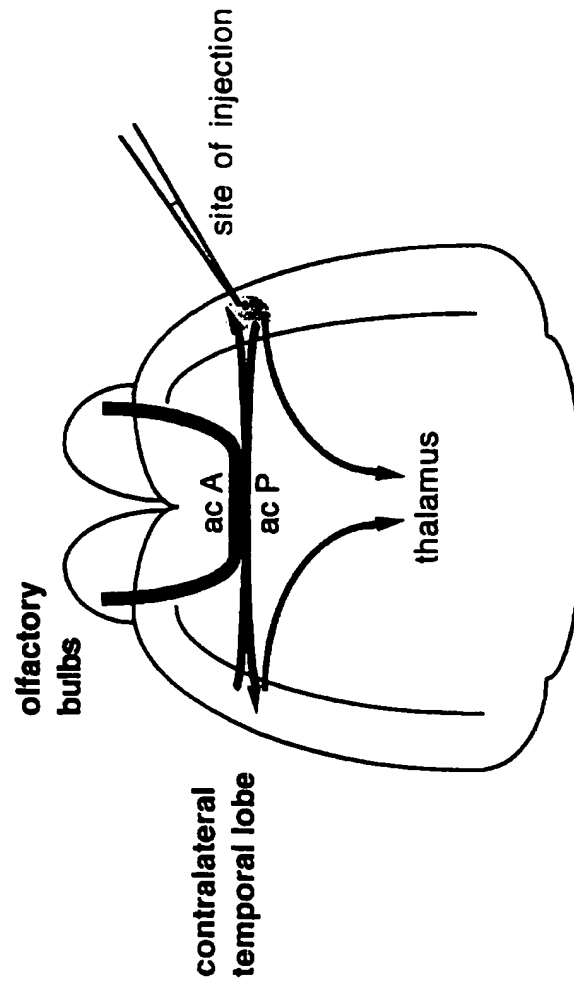


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FIGURE 8



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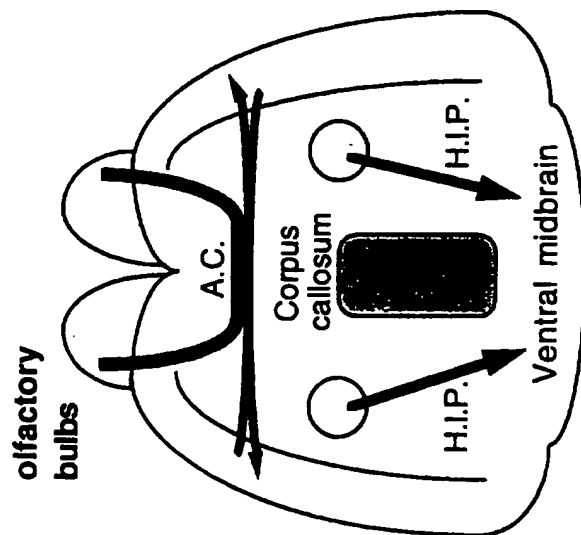
FIGURE 9**Fast Blue dye tracing of the temporal lobe**

In normal mice and Nuk2/Nuk2 homozygotes the dye traces to the contralateral temporal lobe and to the thalamus.
In Nuk1/Nuk1 homozygotes, the dye fails to trace into the contralateral lobe. The dye does trace, however, to the thalamus indicating that this axon pathway is not affected.

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FIGURE 10

Axon pathways affected in Nuk;Sek4 double homozygotes



A.C. Anterior commissure
H.I.P. Habenular-interpeduncle tract

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FIGURE 11

```

1
RAGS  PHVEML A VAALWVCVRG .QEPGRK VA D YA T RAQ.... 50
ELF-1  PAQRPP P LLLLLLPLRA RNEDPAR NA D YA R PRFOVSAVC
EHK1-1 AAPLL L LLVPVPLPL AOGPGG LG HA OHLR....
LERK-3 AAPLL L LLVPVPLPL AOGPGG LG HA OHLR....
LERK-4 .NR P LLRTVLMAAF GSPLRGSS L HV OHLR....
B61 .NEFLWAPL GLCCSL AA D HT F KR....
Eplg2-M RPGORN LG KVLVAVVVA CRLATPLAK LEPSSSL K....L
Eplg2-M RPGORN LS KVLVAVVLT CRLATPLAK LEPSSSL K....L
Eplg2-R RPGORN LS KVLVAVVLT CRLATPLAK LEPSSSL K....L

51
RAGS .QGDH D C VF DS..... V EDKT R V NFD
ELF-1 DGG TVE S GAP..... LP AERN R I NG
EHK1-1 .RE TVQ N V Y NSS..... G AGPG GGGG Q V SRN
LERK-3 .RE TVQ N V Y NSS..... G AGPG GGGG Q V SRN
LERK-4 LRGOAVVELG L V NSSGVGPG AGPG GGGG Q V SRN
B61 .NED T H Q L V Y GP..... G PEGP TFA DWP
Eplg2-M SGK LV YPK G K I RA DHSV..... ADAAM Q I EH
Eplg2-M SGK LV YPK G K I RA DHSV..... ADAAM Q I EH
Eplg2-R SGK LV YPK G K I RA DHSV..... ADAAM Q I EH

101
RAGS SS DHIS. KGF E HSPNG L L T F RP
ELF-1 HAS DNRQ. RGF E AAPCG L L T F RP
EHK1-1 RT NA.S. OCP E HAPHS L L T F RP
LERK-3 RT NA.S. OCP E HAPHS L L T F RP
LERK-4 ES OAEGP RAY V SL F GHVQ I R T F LP
B61 EQL QPOS. KDOV Q SAKHG EKL F R T T K
Eplg2-M QAAA STVLD PNVLV. T S EOE R TI E YN L KH
Eplg2-M QAAA TTVLD PNVLV. T K HOE R TI E YN L KH
Eplg2-R QAAA STVLD PNVLV. T K HOE R TI E YN L KH

151
RAGS PPS SAIP DNGRR. S KL. 200
ELF-1 PPS ATPP N VDR. P. F.
EHK1-1 PPS TPTH N. MW. K. M. F. CC
LERK-3 PPS TPTH N. MW. K. M. F. CC
LERK-4 T V V VPTP ESSG. O. L. OVS CC
B61 S V KPIH QH ED. K. L. TS.
Eplg2-M D T TSNG S E GLENREG GV RT TMKI INKVGQDPNA VTPEQLTTSR
Eplg2-M D T TSNG S E GLENREG GV RT TMKI INKVGQDPNA VTPEQLTTSR
Eplg2-R D T TSNG S E GLENREG GV RT TMKI INKVGQDPNA VTPEQLTTSR

201
RAGS .RPANSC MK IGVHDRV FVDNDKVEN S LEPADDTVRE SAEPSRGENA 250
ELF-1 .RPTN. T LYEAP E IFT SNSSCSGLG
EHK1-1 A TSHSGEKP VP LPQPTH PNVKINVLD FEGEN OVP KLEKSI TS
LERK-3 A TSHSGEKP VP LPQPTH PNVKINVLD FEGEN OVP KLEKSI TS
LERK-4 .K R KSESAH VGS PGESGT MR
B61 .GKITHS PQAHVNPO K RLAADD EVR VLHS. I HS
Eplg2-M P KEAONTVK MA QAPGS R SLGDSGKHE TVNQEEKSGF GASGGS DP
Eplg2-M P KESONTVK TA QAPG. R SOGDSGKHE TVNQEEKSGF GAGGGG DS
Eplg2-R P KESDNTVK TA QAPG. R SOGDSGKHE TVNQEEKSGF.

251
RAGS AOTPAI IR LA..... TL L7 LAM LIL 300
ELF-1 CHL..... F LT..... TV PV WSL GS.
EHK1-1 PKREN L. VG..... IA F MTF AS.
LERK-3 PKREN L. VG..... IA F MTF AS.
LERK-4 GGDTPS LC LL..... LL L ILR LRI L.
B61 AAPRL F L WT..... VL L PLL L OTP.
Eplg2-M DGFFNSKV FAAVGAGCVI III FLTV LLL LKRRHR KHTOORAAAL
Eplg2-M DSFFNSKV FAAVGAGCVI III FLTV LLL LKRRHR KHTOORAAAL
Eplg2-R P NSKV FAAVGAGCVI III FLTV LLL LKRRHR KHTOORAAAL

Eplg2-M SLSTLASPKG GSGTAGTEPS DIIIPLRTE NNYCPHYEKV SGDYGNPVYI
Eplg2-M SLSTLASPKG GSGTAGTEPS DIIIPLRTE NNYCPHYEKV SGDYGNPVYI
Eplg2-R SLSTLASPKG DSGTAGTEPS DIIIPLRTE NNYCPHYEKV SGDYGNPVYI

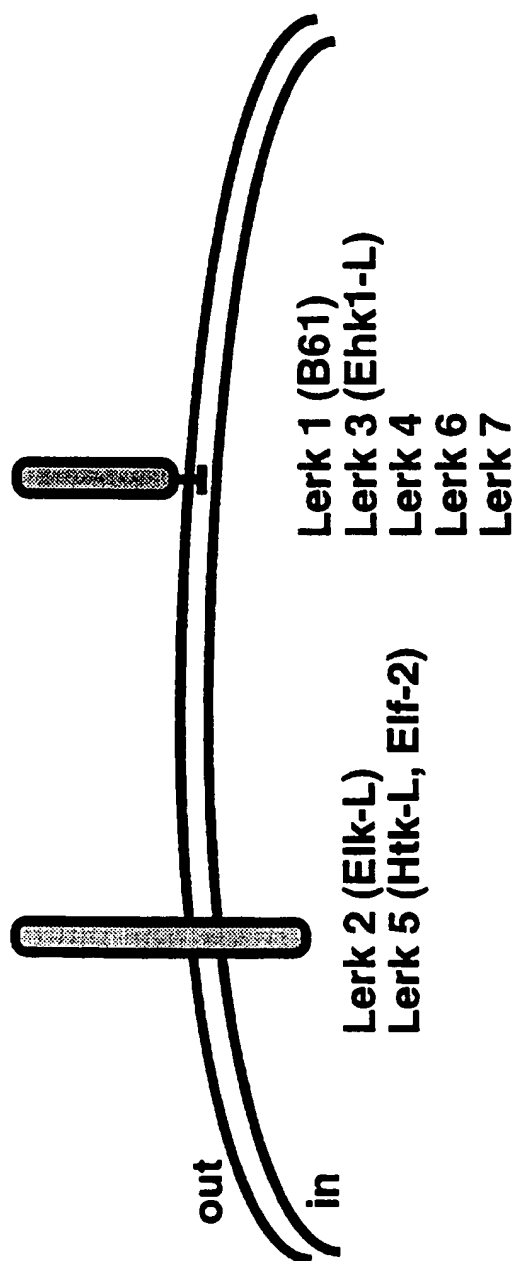
Eplg2-M VOEMPPQSPA NIYYKV
Eplg2-M VOEMPPQSPA NIYYKV
Eplg2-R VOEMPPQSPA NIYYKV

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FIGURE 12

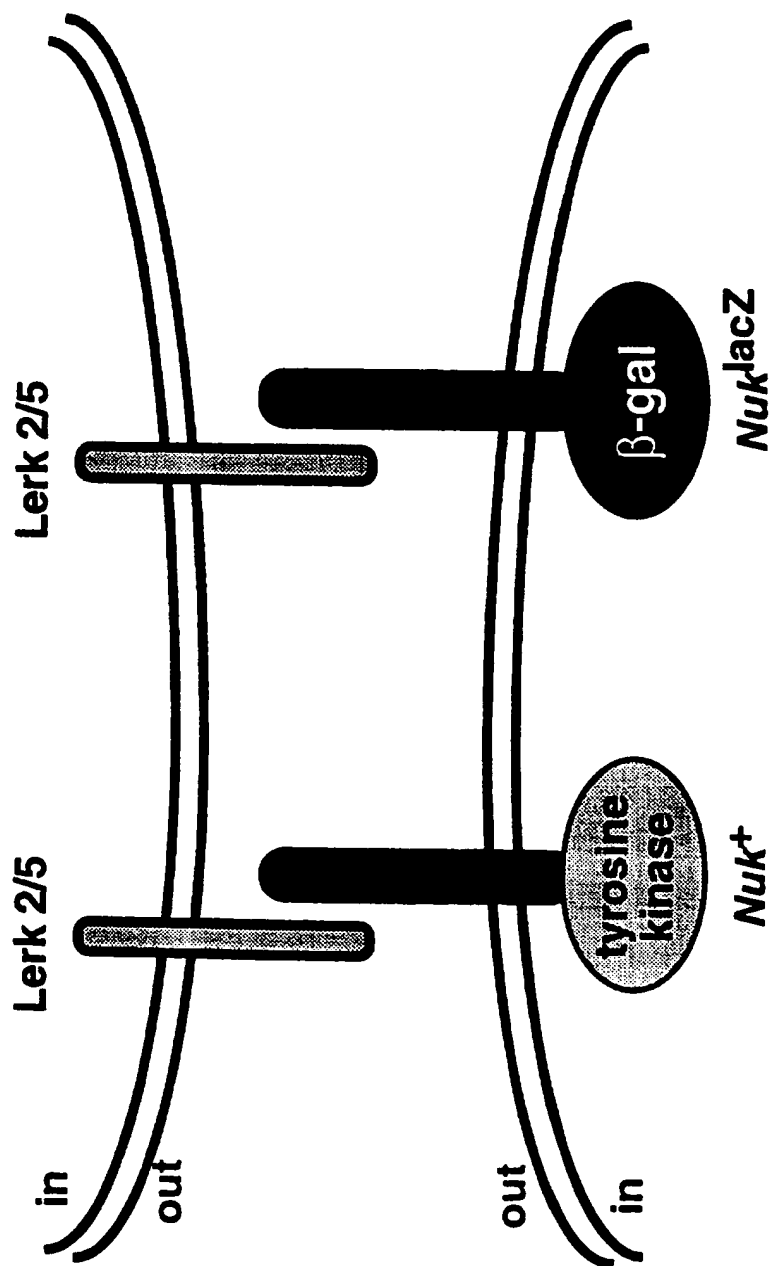
Ligands for EPH receptors are membrane anchored



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FIGURE 13

A potential signaling role for Lerks?



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PL, CA 96/00679

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 G01N33/68 C12N9/12 A61K38/02

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 6 G01N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 95 14776 A (GENENTECH INC ;NEW ENGLAND DEACONESS HOSPITAL (US)) 1 June 1995 see claim 10 ---	18
X	WO 95 27060 A (REGENERON PHARMA) 12 October 1995 see claim 8 ---	18
A	WO 93 00425 A (INST MEDICAL W & E HALL) 7 January 1993 see page 9 - page 11 --- -/--	4-11

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

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- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
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- *A* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

14 February 1997

Date of mailing of the international search report

26 -02- 1997

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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Authorized officer

Hoekstra, S

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

P./CA 96/00679

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	CURR. BIOL. (1995), 5(2), 168-78 CODEN: CUBLE2;ISSN: 0960-9822, 1995, XP002024805 VETTER, MONICA L. ET AL: ".beta. PDGF receptor mutants defective for mitogenesis promote neurite outgrowth in PC12 cells" see the whole document ---	1-20
A	PROC. NATL. ACAD. SCI. U. S. A. (1993), 90(12), 5404-8 CODEN: PNASA6;ISSN: 0027-8424, 1993, XP002024806 TOYOSHIMA, HIDEO ET AL: "Differently spliced cDNAs of human leukocyte tyrosine kinase receptor tyrosine kinase predict receptor proteins with and without a tyrosine kinase domain and a soluble receptor protein" see the whole document ---	1-20
P,X	WO 95 28484 A (AMGEN INC) 26 October 1995 see claim 30 see page 12 ---	1,12,18
P,X	WO 95 30326 A (MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL CORP ;PAWSON ANTHONY (CA); HENKEMEYER MARK (C) 9 November 1995 see page 8, line 15 - page 9, line 19; claims 9,12,13 ---	4-11
P,X	WO 96 26958 A (HARVARD COLLEGE) 6 September 1996 see claim 46 -----	1,12-17

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/CA 96/ 00679

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
Although claims 1-3 and 12-17 are directed to a method of treatment of (diagnostic method practised on) the human/animal body, the search has been carried out and based on the alleged effects of the compound/composition.
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/CA 96/00679

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
WO-A-9514776	01-06-95	AU-A-	1180095	13-06-95
		AU-A-	1210895	13-06-95
		CA-A-	2175892	01-06-95
		CA-A-	2175893	01-06-95
		EP-A-	0730646	11-09-96
		EP-A-	0730740	11-09-96
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		CA-A-	2187167	12-10-95
		ZA-A-	9502762	20-02-96

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		JP-T-	6508747	06-10-94
		NZ-A-	243252	27-11-95

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		CA-A-	2189028	26-10-95
		EP-A-	0756627	05-02-97

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		CA-A-	2186365	09-11-95

WO-A-9626958	06-09-96	NONE		
